



Master's Thesis  
Regional Studies  
Development Geography

"I'M INTERESTED IN EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS EVERYWHERE."  
WORLDVIEWS AND IDENTITIES OF MOBILE YOUTH IN NAIROBI REGION

Nina Miettinen

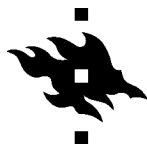
2018

Supervisor:

Venla Bernelius

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI  
FACULTY OF SCIENCE  
DEPARTMENT OF GEOSCIENCES AND GEOGRAPHY  
GEOGRAPHY

P. O. Box 64 (Gustaf Hållströmin katu 2)  
00014 University of Helsinki



Tiedekunta/Osasto Fakultet/Sektion – Faculty Faculty of Science		Laitos/Institution– Department Department of Geosciences and Geography	
Tekijä/Författare – Author Nina Miettinen			
Työn nimi / Arbetets titel – Title ”I’m interested in everything that happens everywhere.” Worldviews and identities of mobile youth in Nairobi region			
Oppiaine /Läroämne – Subject Regional Studies (Development Geography)			
Työn laji/Arbetets art – Level Master’s Thesis		Aika/Datum – Month and year December 2018	Sivumäärä/ Sidoantal – Number of pages 97 p. + annexes 7 p.
Tiivistelmä/Referat – Abstract <p>This master’s thesis is a case study about the perspectives that the mobile youth in the Nairobi region have in their roles in the changing world. The study begins with an assumption that the hegemonic narrative of the modern nation-state is being challenged in the globalizing world. It focuses on the worldviews and identities of the youth who have previously been awarded with a scholarship in the United States via Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program and currently influence in the Nairobi region. Place and citizenship are used as central theoretical concepts in the study.</p> <p>A multimethod design of qualitative approaches was used to conduct the empirical part of the research. The primary data was collected from the Nairobi region YES alumni by semi-structured interviews, observation and a focus group session. In addition, an expert interview was conducted and public reports regarding the subject of the research were used as secondary data. The data was analyzed with Atlas.ti software, combining coding and qualitative content analysis.</p> <p>The main findings of the study state that the YES alumni are globally oriented mobile and flexible citizens who identify with multiple groups and places. They sense belonging to Kenya but also identify as global citizens. Values that emerge during the research are especially related to learning and experiencing, benevolence and being successful. The youth aim to develop skills that respond to the challenges presented by globalization. In addition, the participants describe the exchange experience in the United States as an important factor that has changed the course of their lives in one way or another.</p> <p>As a conclusion it can be summed that the Nairobi region YES alumni are in a position where adjusting to to the changing world is possible especially due to tertiary education and possessing skills that maybe be applied in transnational expert careers. In the end of the research it is suggested that the groups who do not adjust to the changes as flexibly or whose worldviews and identities do not match in the narratives of globalization and mobility should be acknowledged next.</p>			
Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords worldview, identity, globalization, place, citizenship, global citizenship, Nairobi, Kenya, YES program			
Säilytyspaikka – Förvaringställe – Where deposited HELDA, an open-access digital archive of the University of Helsinki, Finland / Library and Online Library of the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, Nairobi, Kenya			
Muita tietoja – Övriga uppgifter – Additional information Supervisor: Venla Bernelius			



Tiedekunta/Osasto Fakultet/Sektion – Faculty Matemaattis-luonnontieteellinen tiedekunta		Laitos/Institution– Department Geotieteiden ja maantieteen laitos
Tekijä/Författare – Author Nina Miettinen		
Työn nimi / Arbetets titel – Title ”Minua kiinnostaa kaikki mikä tapahtuu kaikkialla.” Nairobien alueen nuorten maailmankuvat ja identiteetit liikkuvuuskokemuksen jälkeen		
Oppiaine /Läroämne – Subject Aluetiede (kehitysmaantiede)		
Työn laji/Arbetets art – Level Pro gradu -tutkielma	Aika/Datum – Month and year Joulukuu 2018	Sivumäärä/ Sidoantal – Number of pages 97 s. + liitteet 7 s.
Tiivistelmä/Referat – Abstract <p>Tämä pro gradu -työ on tapaustutkimus vaihto-ohjelmaan osallistuneiden Nairobien alueen nuorten näkemyksistä heidän rooleistaan muuttuvassa maailmassa. Tutkimus lähtee liikkeelle siitä, kuinka moderniin kansallisvaltioon nojaava hegemoninen narratiivi on muutospaineiden alla globalisoituvassa maailmassa. Työssä keskitytään Kennedy Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) -ohjelman kautta stipendin Yhdysvaltoihin saaneiden ja nykyisin Nairobien alueella vaikuttavien nuorten maailmankuviin ja identiteetteihin. Paikan ja kansalaisuuden käsitteet ovat tutkimuksen teoreettisen taustan keskiössä.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen empiirinen osuus nojaa monimetodiseen laadullisen tutkimuksen lähestymistapaan. Ensisijainen aineisto kerättiin YES-ohjelman alumnilta Nairobissa ja sen lähialueilla käyttäen puolistrukturoituja haastatteluita, kohderyhmähaastatteluita ja havainnointia. Lisäksi tehtiin asiantuntijahaastattelu ja toissijaisena aineistona käytettiin aiheeseen liittyviä julkisia raportteja. Aineisto analysoitiin Atlas.ti-ohjelmalla yhdistelemällä koodausta ja laadullista sisällönanalyysia.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset kertovat YES-ohjelman alumnien olevan globaalisti suuntautuneita, joustavia ja liikkuvia kansalaisia, jotka identifioituvat monenlaisiin ryhmiin ja paikkoihin. He tuntevat kuuluvansa osaksi Keniaa, mutta samalla olevansa myös maailmankansalaisia. Nuorten arvomaailmasta esiin nousevat erityisesti oppiminen ja kokeminen, hyvántahtoisuus, sekä menestyksen tavoittelu. Nuoret pyrkivät kehittämään taitoja, jotka vastaavat globalisaation asettamiin vaatimuksiin. Lisäksi he kuvailevat vaihto-oppilaskokemuksen Yhdysvalloissa olevan tärkeä tekijä, joka on muuttanut jollain tapaa heidän elämänsä suuntaa.</p> <p>Johtopäätöksenä voidaan todeta Nairobien alueen YES-ohjelman alumnien olevan asemassa, jossa sopeutuminen maailman muutokseen on mahdollista erityisesti korkean koulutuksen ja monikansallisille työmarkkinoille hyvin soveltuvien taitojen ansiosta. Tutkimuksen lopussa kehoitetaan suuntaamaan katseet kohti ryhmiä, joiden sopeutuminen muutokseen ei välttämättä tapahdu yhtä joustavasti tai joiden maailmankuvat ja identiteetit eivät suoraan kohtaa globalisaation ja liikkuvuuden narratiivien kanssa.</p>		
Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords maailmankuva, identiteetti, globalisaatio, paikka, kansalaisuus, maailmankansalaisuus, Nairobi, Kenia, YES-ohjelma		
Säilytyspaikka – Förvaringställe – Where deposited Helsingin yliopiston digitaalinen arkisto (HELDA) / Kirjasto ja digitaalinen kirjasto, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, Nairobi, Kenia		
Muita tietoja – Övriga uppgifter – Additional information Ohjaaja: Venla Bernelius		

## Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION .....	3
2. WORLDVIEWS AND IDENTITIES IN TIMES OF GLOBALIZATION.....	5
2.1. Nation-states, Globalization and Mobility.....	5
2.2. Worldviews and Identities .....	8
2.3. Place-Related Meanings and Identities.....	10
2.3.1. Meanings of Places.....	10
2.3.2. Sense of Belonging to Place.....	14
2.4. Citizenship-Related Meanings and Identities .....	16
2.4.1. Meanings of Citizenship .....	16
2.4.2. Citizenship as Group Identity.....	19
2.5. Identity Production Through Global Citizenship Education .....	22
3. CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND .....	23
3.1. Experiencing Changes in Kenya.....	23
3.2. Multiple Images of Nairobi.....	27
3.3. Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Program.....	29
3.3.1. YES Program Goals .....	30
3.3.2. YES Alumni Community .....	31
3.3.3. YES Program in Kenya.....	32
3.4. Meaning of Contextual Background.....	33
4. RESEARCH DESIGN.....	34
4.1. Research Methodology .....	34
4.2. Materials .....	35
4.3. Methods for Collecting the Primary Data.....	37
4.3.1. Individual and Pair Interviews .....	37
4.3.2. Observation .....	39
4.3.3. Focus Group .....	40
4.4. Methods for Analyzing the Primary Data.....	41
4.5. Ethical and Methodological Considerations .....	47

5. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS .....	51
5.1. Profile of Participants .....	51
5.2. Meanings of Places .....	55
5.2.1. Kenya .....	55
5.2.2. United States of America .....	58
5.2.3. Other Places.....	59
5.3. Meanings of Citizenship .....	60
5.4. Sense of Belonging .....	63
5.5. Values .....	67
5.5.1. Learning and Experiencing .....	67
5.5.2. Benevolence .....	69
5.5.3. Personal and Interpersonal Qualities.....	70
5.5.4. Values Related to Political Sphere.....	72
5.5.5. People.....	72
5.5.6. Other Emerging Values .....	73
5.6. Changing Worldviews and Shifting Identities.....	74
6. DISCUSSION.....	80
6.1. Meanings Given to Places and Citizenship.....	80
6.2. Values and Attitudes .....	85
6.3. Developments and Changes in Worldviews and Identities .....	87
6.4. YES Alumni's Perspectives on Their Roles in the Changing World .....	88
7. CONCLUSIONS .....	90
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	92
REFERENCES .....	93
ANNEXES .....	99
ANNEX 1. Interview Guide	
ANNEX 2. Background Information Sheet	
ANNEX 3. Research Clearance Permit	
ANNEX 4. Information Letter to Participants	
ANNEX 5. Consent Form to Participants	

# 1. Introduction

The world is in a continuous state of change, which has direct effects on people's worldviews and identities. The effects on the youth are central when aiming to understand possible futures. My master's thesis gives a voice to a group of mobile youth in the Nairobi region and observes their individual perspectives on their worldviews and identities. How the current moment is represented varies from the national as the hegemonic institution of modern history towards organizing the global space through advanced capitalism and global cities. There are also scholars who have questioned whether any moment should be underlined or if everything was rather to be presented as continuous flows. I observe the different geographical imaginations through the concepts of place and citizenship.

My master's thesis is a case study of the youth who are currently active around the Nairobi region in Kenya. Previously everyone in this group has completed a sponsored study period abroad, the Kennedy Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program, in the United States. It is a unique group worth researching, as the goals of the YES program suggest an important role for this group of youth in the future. Furthermore, development geography has traditionally focused on researching people in vulnerable situations. My research adheres to the recent shift that aims to bring forth people in more powerful positions and articulate their possible role and impact in the world.

The research draws from the humanistic tradition, focusing on the human world and especially subjective experiences of people. Yi-Fu Tuan's description of humanistic geography as a discipline that studies people's relations with nature as well as their feelings and ideas in relation to space and place has guided me along the way (Tuan 1976). Other than that, my interest lies on activities of people that according to Tuan (1976) reveal the quality of human awareness. Lastly, the aspect of learning which Tuan (1976) also identifies as one of the core interests of humanist geographers is a central part of my research.

My main research question is "How do the Nairobi region YES alumni perceive their role in the changing world?" I aim to answer this question by taking a closer focus on three aspects that are visible through the following questions:

- What kind of meanings do the YES alumni give to places and citizenships?
- What kind of values and attitudes do the YES alumni have behind their perspectives, as well as current and future activities?
- How do the YES alumni explain the possible developments and changes in their worldviews and identities?

I respond to the research questions by using a multimethod research design of qualitative approaches that draws from phenomenological-hermeneutical, phenomenographic and ethnographic methodologies. The approach combines semi-structured interviews with observation and a focus group session. In addition, I have used secondary sources, such as reports, to have a deeper understanding of the context of the study. Coding and qualitative content analysis are used as tools for analyzing the primary data.

The research has a personal meaning for me, as I want to observe by academic means the instability that I imagine having been sensing in the world recently. I seek to understand how a group of youth who share a similar study abroad period in the United States as I do, experience their lives and role in a different location. I believe it is important to give a voice to and aim to understand the role of the youth in the African continent where the population structure is relatively younger and where the world's gaze is increasingly turning to.

In the following chapter, I focus on the hegemonic narratives that frame our current times, and how the two theoretical concepts of place and citizenship are tied to these narratives from the aspect of worldviews and identities. In chapter three I describe the contextual background of the research by depicting aspects of Kenya, Nairobi and the YES program. Chapter four explains the materials and methods used in the empirical part of my study, and chapter five presents the results of it. In chapter six I discuss the results in relation to the theoretical background and finally present my conclusions in chapter seven.

## **2. Worldviews and Identities in Times of Globalization**

### **2.1. Nation-States, Globalization and Mobility**

Various narratives and hypotheses aim to describe the current state of the world and predict the possible futures for human beings. According to Étienne Balibar (1995), the religious and the national are the two competing models of hegemonic institutions of the modern history. I will focus here on the national, and the changes that have taken place and might take place in the future. My key assumption is that these changes are essential when it comes to considering the current human activities and the formation of identities and worldviews.

Isin & Wood (1999) begin by observing that the modern nation-state is currently challenged from both above via globalization, and below via tribalism. The intensity of flows across national boundaries, such as flows of information, pollution and migrants, provide a challenge to the sovereignty of the nation-state, as new spaces are difficult to govern with fixed and self-contained territorial boundaries. According to Isin & Wood (1999), these flows express new types of relations between transnational organizations, corporations, individuals, movements and spaces, leading to new types of identities that relate to interconnectedness and mobility. In addition, they remind that the flows are happening simultaneously and with multiple rationalities, causing hybridity and making not one but several globalizations to exist. Thus, globalization should not be conceptualized as a fixed geography but describing an intensified network of flows (Isin & Wood 1999). According to Isin & Wood (1999), this leads to a point where the “homogeneous and homogenizing master identity” of the nation-state is decentering.

Doreen Massey points out that a particular hegemonic understanding of the nature of space was developed within the history of modernity (Massey 2005). Local communities, different cultures, as well as nations were assumed to have always had their localities, regions and nation-states as divided up. Massey writes that it was one way of imagining space, and now we are experiencing another way of geographical imagination when starting to organize the global space. However, she adds that these kinds of projects are simplified conjunctions of space and place, and this way of thinking is increasingly becoming under challenge (Massey 2005). She reminds that these multiple attempts of articulating the world by constructing temporary time-space constellations only



highlight the significance of multiplicity. Neil Smith (2004) argues likewise that globalization itself is an attempt to rescale our world vision.

There have been similar observations by other theorists and scientists from different fields who have considered the same phenomenon from a different angle Paul Crutzen (2002), for example, has named the current geological epoch “the Anthropocene” arguing that the thorough human domination on Earth began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Even though this narrative has been widely used on different fields since its publication, it has faced certain critique. For example, Malm & Hornborg (2014) claim that the development leading to wider industrialization was due to uneven distribution of resources within the human species, and that the whole humanity should not carry the burden caused by few. They thus criticize this narrative of mystification and taking humans presented as one group for granted. According to Malm & Hornborg (2014) human domination is always sociogenic, meaning that the driving forces derive from a specific social structure that always involves political choices. They propose “technocene” and “capitalocene” as alternative names for the current epoch.

David Harvey pointed out already in 1990 that the mode of production, associated with rapid technological change and economic growth, plays an essential role what comes to the social construction of space and time (Harvey 1990a). According to Isin & Wood (1999), new types of occupations and social differentiation, as well as new groups and classes are forming because of advanced capitalism. For example, the shift from manufacturing to service industries, dematerialization, and more labor spent on engineering create new groups (Isin & Wood 1999). Through a new work ethic and ethic of consumption, advanced capitalism modifies the idea of citizen by creating an image of self as an autonomous agent (Isin & Wood 1999). Isin & Wood (1999) remind however that capitalism needs citizenship as a façade to buy the loyalty of workers, and hierarchies of imperialism to naturalize the inequalities that markets produce. Nevertheless, stable identities are dislocated and disrupted, and the postmodern condition presents more unstable and fluid identities (Isin & Wood 1999).

Isin & Wood (1999) argue that under the conditions of changed advanced capitalism, the struggle for recognition and redistribution happens rather between groups than places. According to them, the local professional-managerial groups have had a central role in articulating local to the global through establishing global networks. Isin & Wood (1999) note that the boundaries of the modern

state restrict the life chances of this professional-managerial group as they rather have cosmopolitan tendencies.

Global cities serve as nodes of power in the global era. Sassen (2002) describes urban spaces as massive concentrations of resources with an intensity, complexity and global span that have never been seen before. Especially economic globalization and the development of telecommunications have greatly affected the development of urban spaces. The highly specialized transactions connect cities with each other creating patterned networks. This is what makes the global city different from the modern city (Sassen 2002). Friedmann (1995) represents the global city as a strategic space of globalization. According to him the global city is an organizing node of a global economic system, however not meaning that it truly encompasses the entire world. In addition, the global city is an urbanized space of intense economic and social interaction and is hierarchically arranged. Finally, the global city is controlled by transnational class. Mau (2010) points out that the transnational expert classes reach beyond economic decision-makers and economic globalization, including various professions and jobs in politics, administrations, and knowledge-based organizations.

Isin & Wood (1999) continue from these ideas by analyzing the global city from the aspect of identity. They note that the hegemony of transnational classes over the city is constantly increasing, and that new group identities are forming as new professional groups are needed to service the production, consumption and exchange needs in the global city. They also point out that usually these fields require skills that are acquired from higher education institutions. In addition, these new professional-managerial groups receive salary based on status and position, which forms new kinds of career hierarchies (Isin & Wood 1999). Steffen Mau (2010) similarly presents that there is a significant relationship between educational level and the degree of individual transnational involvement.

Raskin (2006) calls the current shift by the name “Great Transition”. His argument is that the social space has enlarged throughout human history, and now we are for the first time shifting towards a global phase. This includes changes in identities as well. According to the latency hypothesis, more and more people are inclined to understand themselves as part of the common community of fate that includes all of humanity and the biosphere (Kriegman 2006). Kriegman (2006) argues that this shift towards a shared identity challenges our conventional categories of identity. As Raskin (2006) underlines as a part of the Great Transition initiative, national identities have appeared to the picture

only recently. Even more recently, the multinational entities have started forming, even though Kriegman (2006) reminds that it has not been a linear process. He also points out that the current transnational activity helps to deepen the latency (Kriegman 2006).

How about tribalism then? Lloyd Fallers (1974) notes that most societies contain some kind of primordial loyalties. He continues that these solidarities sometimes become divisive and threaten the integrity of states. The meaning of tribalism is nowadays often related to ethnic divisiveness (Fallers 1974). Nevertheless, Paul James (2006) argues that tribalism is a way of life like all the others, and should be considered as an ontological formation. He notes that the concept has a double sense as a subjectivity and ideology as well. He adds that the complication of contemporary society is that different ontological formations such as tribalism, modernism and postmodernism always disturb the ontological security of each other, as the social identification and political organization take such different forms (James 2006).

Lastly, it must be mentioned that the new mobilities paradigm questions any stable visions about the world order. According to Sheller & Urry (2006), the paradigm aims to treat change equally normal with stability in the theories of social sciences. The paradigm sees mobility as a resource and acknowledges that not everyone has the same relationship with it. Mobility, as well as control over mobility, are power-related. In addition, places and people are not distinct but have complex relations, and activities are not seen separate from the places (Sheller & Urry 2006).

## **2.2. Worldviews and Identities**

Humanistic geography acknowledges that humans are both producers and products in relation to the surrounding environment (Tuan 1976). As I have considered the surrounding global environment in its multiplicity and the changes in the hegemonic narratives, I will next approach the human perspective by observing the formation of worldviews and identities more closely. My focus with worldviews will be on given meanings and values. The focus on identities is mostly narrowed down to the feeling of belonging. I also rely to the assumption that life experiences influence people's identity formation. Worldviews and identities are further observed through the concepts of place and citizenship.

Worldview is usually understood as a complete system of beliefs about the world (Helve 2015). According to Helve (2015), both the environment and the individual's development influence one's worldview. These include for example the influence of parents, school and religion. Helve adds that objective measuring about what experiences contribute to the construction of individual's worldview is very difficult, and this is why my research focuses on observing what the participants personally think has contributed in their perspectives about the world and themselves.

Values and attitudes reveal people's beliefs about the world. Billig (1996) understands values as elements of common sense whose truth or desirability is taken for granted. According to him there can be both desirable and undesirable values. Values often serve as more generalist objects of agreement behind particular attitudes. Billig notes that attitudes are most often understood as evaluations, which are either for or against things, issues, people, or something else. However, he continues by pointing out that compared to actions, attitudes are seen as general statements as actions are more specific instances. According to Billig, one possibility to approach values and attitudes is through speech, as individuals evaluate objects through commenting them. This is understood to reflect the individual's attitude towards a specific target. Thus, it is expected that attitudes and values can be researched by observing individual's speech and argumentation. He reminds that attitudes and values should always be examined in their rhetorical context (Billig 1996).

According to Yi-Fu Tuan (1979), experiences are largely subconscious, especially experiencing space and time. Reflecting happens mostly when something unexpected happens. Seeing has the effect of putting a distance between the self and the object, and thinking creates distance (Tuan 1979). Tuan (1979) also notes a paradox: "Thought creates a distance and destroys the immediacy of direct experience, yet it is by thoughtful reflection that the elusive moments in the past draw near to us in present reality and gain a measure of permanence". It is thus through reflection that experiences and beliefs of the world can be captured.

The concept of identity has been criticized but for example Stuart Hall has argued that no better concepts exist to describe the wholeness of it (Du Gay & Hall 2011). What is important according to him is recognizing identity formation as a continuous process where identity is never stable or fixed. Therefore it is not possible to discover authentic identities as they constantly change. Isin & Wood (1999) agree and note that theories of identity have recently placed emphasis on the

instability of identity. They add that the conversation has mainly been concerned with class habitus, and call for noticing other forms, such as gender and age as well. Burke & Stets (2012) indicate that identities can be categorized to role identities, social identities, and personal identities. They explain that identities control meanings given to different things or applied to individuals themselves, such as who they are or where they belong (Burke & Stets 2012). Belonging in human geography has been understood as “a person’s sense of attachment to, and rootedness in, a specific community, neighborhood, place, region or country” (Castree et al. 2013).

Isin & Wood (1999) argue that groups and classes should be highlighted instead of spaces, as spatial metaphors such as local and global, mask more than they reveal by creating inappropriate dichotomies. Several geographers have however argued that space and place are worth considering when discussing about identities. Relph (1980) for example notes the powerful identity-reinforcing features of community and place towards one another. Paasi (1997) cites Eisenstadt & Giesen (1995) who underline that collective identities are always formed by using dichotomies “us” and “them”, and spatiality plays a role in it as well.

In this research I observe meanings that the participants give to different places as well as citizenships as a part of their worldviews. I also pay attention to values and attitudes behind the given meanings and perspectives. Regarding identities, I am especially interested in citizenship as a group identity, as well as place as a spatial identity. I acknowledge that they relate to each other and are sometimes difficult to observe separately due to the hegemonic geographical imaginations. I will however stay open to other meanings that individuals attach to themselves in terms of identities.

## **2.3. Place-Related Meanings and Identities**

### **2.3.1. Meanings of Places**

Does place have any meaning in the future world order? Yi-Fu Tuan (1976) reminds that it is exactly the task of a humanist geographers to find out what factors play a role in space becoming a place. This can be researched through the meanings that individuals construct from their subjective experiences (Tuan 1976; Ponto 2017). Edward Relph (1980) gives two major reasons for this. First, the phenomenon of place is a fundamental expression of man’s involvement in the

world. Second, as the knowledge of the nature of place develops, the existing places and the creation of new places may be better maintained and manipulated. I therefore assume that place still holds importance in the changing world. It feels natural to begin my observation of place with the help of these two geographers that were among the first ones to build theory about place in humanistic geography, even though Lewicka (2011) has a good reason to argue that the studies on people-place relationships have been stuck in this same point for 40 years already.

Relph (1980) begins by underlining that all things in the world are experienced in their meaning. Thus, also places can only be known in their meanings. Places, according to him, are significant centers of our immediate experiences of the world, fusions of human and natural order. They involve concentration of intentions, attitudes, purposes and experience and therefore set apart from surrounding space (Relph 1980). Tuan (1979) explains place with the help of another concept, space. “When space feels familiar, it has become place”, he writes. According to Edward Relph, identity is a central aspect in our experience of places. The identity of a place might influence people, but also essential is a person’s or a group’s identity towards a place (Relph 1980).

Relph (1980) explains that all places are individually experienced. Because of that, a real or true identity of a place does not exist. Events and actions have significance in the context of certain places as humans order their experiences of the world by using places as basic elements (Relph 1980). According to Tuan (1976) the size of human places may vary from an armchair up to the nation-state and might be experienced either more directly through senses or through symbolic means such as art, education and politics. Relph (1980) also agrees that the scale of a place can be almost anything, depending on the focus of human intention. He also notes that places are important sources of identity for different groups and communities, not to individuals only.

How are places then experienced? According to Relph (1980), it is through sensations, present circumstances and purposes, past experiences and associations, unfolding sequences of perspectives, and various cultural and aesthetic criteria. Personal places of direct experience serve as a basis for experiencing more public places (Relph 1980). There are also different types of identities of places that can be observed (Relph 1980). Places can be seen as lived and dynamic, being full with meanings. They can also be seen as records and expressions of the cultural values and experiences, or an environment that possesses qualities that form a primary basis for public or

consensus knowledge of that place. Relph describes that these kinds of place identities can be experienced as an insider to that place (Relph 1980). According to him, the identity of place can be also experienced as an outsider. Then place can be experienced as a background for selected functions, or as a single dimension of locations or a space where objects and activities are located. Place can also be a provider of a superficial, ready-made mass identity that can be changed and manipulated. Finally, place can be incidental (Relph 1980).

It should be added that according to (Relph 1980), there are also more shallow levels of insideness and outsideness. A sensitive and open-minded outsider might for example sense insideness to a place when attempting to appreciate the full significance of the place. My question is, could this definition be close to what individuals might experience when completing a study abroad program? There is a difference of experiences if comparing for example with tourism and travel. Relph critiques tourism of inauthenticity, as travelers are often using someone else's ranking and decisions to decide what is worth seeing and what places are worth visiting. He writes that the experience is being narrowed to collecting places and traveling for social ends, rather than experiencing the uniqueness and differences of places (Relph 1980). Nevertheless, there are several forms of study abroad with different purposes. Some of them may relate closer to tourism, while other programs have completely different aims and objectives.

Relph (1980) points out that when our intentions shift, our knowledge on places also changes. According to him it is not a source of confusion and should be seen as a source of richness in our geographical experience. Each type of place might complement the others (Relph 1980). This is an argument through which I observe the participants in this research. I pay attention to their shifting intentions and find out how it affects their experience of places. I aim to see place through the subjective experience of people but notice that it is not possible to capture their complete experience through interviews. This leads me to research what kinds of perspectives the participants have on the places meaningful for them.

### ***Expanding Geographical Imaginations***

The meanings given to places, as well as the understanding of places in general is under constant change. Doreen Massey begins the discussion by pointing out that our geographical imaginations play an essential role in all the hassle about globalization (Massey 2005). There is a vision of an

immense, unstructured, free unbounded space, as well as a vision of an imagination of the world's geography in terms of political cosmology (Massey 2005). Massey underlines that this vision is in contradiction to the modernist vision, and represents a world of flows instead of bounded places. This leads to globalization becoming a grand narrative just like modernity did (Massey 2005).

Massey (2005) warns that this kind of aspatial view of globalization presents only one particular form of globalization, where spatial differences are presented as steps under a temporal sequence. She argues that capitalist globalization has this role in the current world with its institutions and professionals realizing the narrative. However, Massey (2005) argues that there are nevertheless changing forms of globalizations instead of a monotonic, linear change. According to her observations, "capital, the rich, the skilled can move easily about the world, meanwhile the poor and the unskilled from the so-called margins of this world are both instructed to open up their borders and told to stay where they are" (Massey 2005). She writes that both identities and imaginations are transformed in the times of transnational interconnectedness (Massey 2005), and points out that the relationality of identities is visible in terms of both space and time.

David Harvey also notes the time-space compression and underlines its encouraging effects on homogenization and differentiation of places (Harvey 1990b). He argues that place is actually becoming more important in the period of globalization. For example, the processes of capital accumulation note the specificities of different places, such as their histories, cultures and environments (Harvey 1990b). Thus, it is essential to observe how places are represented in discourse. Hubbard et al. (2004) sum up that the territorialization, de-territorialization and re-territorialization of the world happens constantly and in unexpected ways.

Tuan (1979) notes that the sense of self grows out of the exercise of power. This kind of sense may be individual or collective, but effort of the mind is required to make larger units visible (Tuan 1979). Tuan mentions the earth as a large unit already in his writings in the 1970s. This makes one wonder about the whole world as a place. Can globe be a place and is it going to be necessary for everyone in the global era? Erik Swyngedouw provides another alternative to this question. Due to the changing world driven by advanced capitalism, human geographers have had to start understanding place simultaneously both as unique and as connected (Castree et al. 2013). Erik Swyngedouw calls this "glocalization" (Swyngedouw 1997). Lewicka (2011) writes along the



same lines and notes that the understanding of place as a source of potential social interactions responds better to the globalized world spaces of today than the previous understanding of place as a stable, bounded and historically continuous entity.

### **2.3.2. Sense of Belonging to Place**

Castree et al. (2013) define place attachment as “the sense of belonging, loyalty, or affection that a person feels for one or more places”. In these places, a person has formative experiences for example with family and friends, during work and leisure. Edward Relph (1980) describes an authentic sense of place by being inside and belonging to your place both as an individual and as a member of community and knowing this without reflecting upon it. According to him, this is an important source of identity. He also wonders if place is essentially its people as previous studies had concluded that an attachment to home area was primarily concerned with the interaction between the individual and other people (Relph 1980). Lewicka (2011) argues that even though place attachment seems to be a universal character, the strength and type of it varies depending on additional factors. The factors could for example be the scale, size or physical and social characteristics of a place, or the social and economic status, residence length and mobility, and age of people (Lewicka 2011; Scannell & Gifford 2010).

Relph (1980) has been worried about what happens to place in the times of growing mobility and interconnectedness. According to him, home is the foundation of our identity, as it is from where we depart and orient ourselves towards the world, both as individuals and as members of the community. Relph argues that compared to that, other associations with places are with limited significance. However, he notes that it seems that in the contemporary society this kind of profound attachment to a home place is not as common and claims that the modern man is a homeless being due to increased mobility and splitting of the functions previously associated with home (Relph 1980). Nevertheless, he states that between complete attachment and unattachment, there are of course other stages of associations. Relph also notes that some of our significant places are not always immediately present. We could remember them for example from childhood (Relph 1980).

Relph worries about placelessness, which he defines as an attitude that is not acknowledging significance in places. He observes that attachment to place is unimportant in the economic system that pervades all aspects of modern life. In fact, spatial efficiency would be easier to reach in the

placeless conditions (Relph 1980). Usher (2002) reflects the consequences of the contemporary conditions to identity and suggests that globalization should not be defined as a state of “homelessness”. He notes that a traditional assumption has been that stability of place results in stability of meaning and identity, but there could be other alternatives to this assumption. Steffen Mau (2010) uses the concept of the “mobile person”, to describe how mobility is increasingly part of contemporary life. According to him, the mobile person is relatively unattached to place, and able and willing to move as needed. Increased personal freedom, ability to deal with stress and adjust to different social and cultural contexts are related to increased mobility, but also some stability is needed to avoid rootlessness and drifting (Mau 2010).

Yi-Fu Tuan (1996) remarks that the pathway from smaller to larger world is in one sense natural, as human beings enter to larger spheres of activity and responsibility from the moment they are born. Life starts from home and moves towards the world when the individual is growing up. Of course this path is more or less restricted for each individual, which makes entering larger spheres easier to some than others (Tuan 1996). Ponto (2017) calls this “a personal-level time-space compression”.

According to Lewicka (2011), the best predictor of place attachment has consistently found to be the amount of time spent in that place. Recent studies have argued that mobility between different places can strengthen the feelings of belonging to places, as well as young people’s local knowledge (Ponto 2017). Lewicka (2011) agrees and notes that even though some places would be losing their meaning, it is possible that the importance of place has actually grown in the contemporary world. Only the form of place might have changed, as for example home can still be a place where people feel attached, even though home itself might have a different meaning, or multiple meanings. This is why these kinds of changes in meanings should be further researched (Lewicka 2011).

Doreen Massey points out that one of the problems has been a continuous misidentification of place with “community” (Massey 1994). She notes that communities exist beyond a certain place, such as religious, ethnic or political communities, or people with other similar interests in different places. In addition, having only a single “community” in a certain place is quite rare (Massey 1994). In this research, I understand place attachment as a synonym to sense of belonging to a place. I observe it as a spatial identity that individuals and groups can have.

## **2.4. Citizenship-Related Meanings and Identities**

### **2.4.1. Meanings of Citizenship**

The concept of citizenship has had different meanings in different times. Usually it defines a person's membership in a polity and consists simultaneously of a set of practices, as well as civil, political and social rights and duties (Isin & Wood 1999). Isin & Wood (1999) note that it has been argued that citizenship itself is a Western concept. Max Weber (1927) was developing the concept, and did not recognize the existence of citizenship in other civilizations even though other ways of organizing a society and concepts of a political membership and status existed. Later, nation-states became the dominant form of organizing and spread to almost all over the world. Thus, what was first a particular way of organizing citizenship in a particular place became almost universal through contingent and political processes. Isin & Wood (1999) describe the nation-state as "a polity that has "colonized" everyday life in the world".

Citizenship became tied to the nation-state and developed to a modern citizenship: a legal and political membership in a nation-state, but also a tool of articulating for rights (Isin & Wood 1999). Modern citizenship therefore originates with territory, as everyone must belong to a nation-state through birth and/or residence. Even before that, citizenship has always been tied to location, only the measurement of location has changed throughout history. Nowadays some countries allow dual or multiple citizenships while others do not. Isin & Wood (1999) also note how nationalism, capitalism, and imperialism defend each other: nations were born from and within imperialism, and when power shifted from monarchies to corporations, nation-states served as efficient means to defend capitalism (Isin & Wood 1999). One of imperialism's many tools according to Isin & Wood (1999) were individual rights, because they were a privilege granted to a select group and never universal.

Like many other concepts, citizenship is not fixed but constantly changing and contested. Isin & Wood (1999) remind that in the West there has been changes in citizenship in every age since the ancient Greeks. The tension towards the nation-state as a dominating polity reaches the notion of citizenship as well, questioning how permanent the current notion is (Sassen 1996). Different groups demand recognition that citizenship does not currently provide. At the same time, links between different spaces increase and broaden with an accelerating speed, providing possibilities

for people to connect and cross the national borders in multiple ways. The forming postmodern identities place demands to the development of the concept of citizenship (Isin & Wood 1999). An important question is, will citizenship become a concept that recognizes different identities and grants specific rights to also groups demanding specific rights in a polity, and is that polity still the nation-state or something completely different?

### ***Beyond Nation-State***

The globalization debate has been one factor in accelerating the discussion about the changing status of citizenship (Isin & Wood 1999). Isin & Wood (1999) point out that institutions in the global regimes of governance are rising and are already redefining the rights and obligations of citizens inside the nation-states. However, new spaces for groups are opening up simultaneously as globalization might be weakening the nation-state (Isin & Wood 1999). Isin & Wood (1999) state that it cannot be predicted what kind of cosmopolitan regimes or other arrangements will rise before we see whether a cosmopolitan virtue will prevail over territorial claims of sovereignty.

Isin & Wood (1999) underline that certain “races” and ethnic groups have been central in defining the modern nations. Nevertheless, multiethnic political communities have been a majority throughout the recorded history (Kymlicka 1995). The claims of group rights are rising, and groups such as the aboriginals and immigration are challenging both the state and the individual as the sovereignties of modernity (Isin & Wood 1999). A recent attempt has been made to employ an international or universal rhetoric of rights. According to Isin & Wood (1999), many call this attempt by the name of cosmopolitan citizenship.

Matthews & Sidhu (2005) note that citizenship must take into account the globalizing imperatives as well as the resulting possible formation of new identities and working conditions. They sum up two different points of view from which the theorists have approached this new situation: either by uncoupling nationality from citizenship and endorsing global citizenship or calling for deepening one’s democratic citizenship of a nation.

Global citizenship has its roots in cosmopolitanism that dates back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and Greek Cynics, who spoke of “citizens of the cosmos” (Kriegman 2006). They were followed by the Stoic philosophers who raised the thought that humans are citizens of the world and that all humanity belongs to a single moral community (Kriegman 2006). Kriegman (2006) indicates to the Great

Transition when arguing that the current historic moment is favourable for global citizens to emerge. He underlines the importance of drawing strength from both unity and diversity for the shift to happen.

Jääskeläinen & Repo (2011) note that there are multiple ways that global citizenship is understood in today's world. It can mean for example an identity, cosmopolitan orientation, internationalization, glocalization, political cosmopolitanism, economic cosmopolitanism, as well as ethical global citizenship. Papastephanou (2003) summarizes this observation by pointing out that there is no linear extension of citizenship from local to national to global, even though many see it especially as an extension beyond national borders (Pashby 2011). According to her theory the key issue in global citizenship is to observe how individuals engage with difference, as the notion of self in citizen-subjectivity relates to how the individual's understanding of "the Other" changes (Papastephanou 2003). Also Eriksen (2014) separates cosmopolitanism from moral universalism and claims that the concept insists for dialogue "even – or perhaps especially – when differences are profound and fundamental". On the other hand, there are scholars who view all humans as global citizens, only some of us bearing the responsibility that comes with it (Sterri 2014).

Seyla Benhabib refers to flexible citizenship, where the concept helps noticing that the individual can be simultaneously a citizen on different scales, such as municipal, regional, national, or transnational (Benhabib 2006). Mitchell & Parker (2008) for instance have conducted an empirical study where they found out that the youth flexibly discuss different issues on other scales than just the national and the global. Flexible citizenship fits well with Steffen Mau's description of the "mobile person" (Mau 2010).

Witoszek (2014) argues that global citizenship is not "global" in the sense that a person must act beyond borders and around the world. It can be for example affecting locally to matters that have global influence. She continues that "even though the problems are global, the motivation has to come from individuals who necessarily will be rooted in their local context." According to her the motivation for action will derive in smaller local communities. However, this kind of simplification can be questioned. Is it always the local context where everyone finds motivation or could it be

found in other contexts as well, encouraged by others that are close but not physically in the same place?

#### **2.4.2. Citizenship as Group Identity**

Group identities are formed when individuals recognize resemblance in some attributes of other individuals. These attributes become the basis of identification (Isin & Wood 1999). Even though citizenship and identity are often presented as opposites, citizenship is a form of group identity (Isin & Wood 1999). To many the concept of citizenship represents universal while identity represents particular, although Isin & Wood (1999) point out that citizenship is as exclusive as other group identities, including only selected parts of the population.

Isin & Wood (1999) note that identities are shaped by specific chains of historical events and ideas. Recently the formation of nation-states has been dominating the spatial world order. In spite of this, there has been different ways to present citizenship as an identity. Some view it as one identity among the others, as some describe it as the master political identity (Isin & Wood 1999). Isin & Wood (1999) create a distinction between the two concepts by examining that citizenship carries legal weight while identity carries social and cultural weight. However, they note that nationalism is a powerful imaginary that frames people's perception of their social and political space and identity, and there is a symbolic importance of citizenship as a national identity. They conclude that if there has been a master identity imposed by the modern nation-state, the new cultural politics has effectively questioned it (Isin & Wood 1999).

#### ***Flexible Identities beyond National***

Friedman (1989) proposes that new identities are emerging as national identities are weakening. Isin & Wood (1999) join him by arguing that some of these new identities challenge the sovereignty of the modern nation-state as they form primarily across national borders and create new transversal and transnational spaces, described also as globalization. Simultaneously new rights and obligations are emerging across the borders (Isin & Wood 1999). Isin & Wood (1999) provide two possibilities: either strong identifications with national culture are loosening while other cultural ties are strengthening, or national identities remain strong but other identities are becoming equally significant.

Isin & Wood (1999) describe the current moment as an identity crisis. They question however whether it is a result of postmodern globalization or a problem that originates back to modernity, through the exclusiveness of citizenship. Therefore hybridity is now a key concept when it comes to discussing identities. According to Isin & Wood (1999) hybridity prevents categorizations of people and gives more weight to the fluidity and contingency of identity. Mau (2010) sums up that however the observed changes are named, individuals must increasingly create their own identities in the absence of a received identity.

Anssi Paasi (1997) states that there is a tendency to think that having a state citizenship and a national identity is nowadays self-evident. According to him more and more identities are however forming beyond the national borders due to the current economic, political and cultural changes. Matthews & Sidhu (2005) remind nevertheless that globalization does not mean that globally oriented and supra-territorial forms of subjectivities are forming automatically. Isin & Wood (1999) argue from the aspect of advanced capitalism and claim that new identities are also forming through the new class that the conditions of advanced capitalism has created. They underline that these kind of identities are as important as the ones that form through the new social movements. Mau (2010) similarly points out that transnational contacts depend also on the political and economic relations between the different nation-states and thus partly determine identity formation of individuals beyond national borders.

Émile Durkheim (1960/1893) has observed the remote relationship between the state and the individual and come into a conclusion that there is a need for secondary groups for individuals to associate and identify. Durkheim (1992) has proposed that professional groups would replace regional groups as intermediate associations between the individual and the state to decrease the political and social problems. The reason proposed was that regional groups no longer have much importance as people are mobile and lack loyalties to place; professional groups would be more permanent thus creating a stronger attachment (Isin & Wood 1999). Isin & Wood (1999) bring the issue of participation into the discussion by noting that a better definition for cosmopolitan citizenship is a membership in the new professions that qualify one to participate, not a membership in a global polity.

One of the emerging identities that has become in the center of focus is the global identity. Kriegmann (2006) combines global identities with global citizenship, however noting that despite the emergence of the global identities, global citizenship is not yet legally defined on a political level. Social psychologists have developed an Identification With All Humanity Scale that quantitatively measures people's identification with all humans in comparison to other, smaller groups such as the people who share the same citizenship (McFarland 2012). These kinds of studies however assume the linearity of identity by measuring identity on a certain scale.

The assumptions of global identities have also received criticism. Laclau (1995) for example reminds that universal identity does not exist as groups always struggle to gain representational hegemony and establish their particularisms as universals. Bourn (2016) points out that according to their recent research conducted about global citizenship in Europe, a young person's identity and sense of place were still mainly influenced by specific local and national factors.

Pashby (2012) points out that the concept of "global citizenship" presumes that a global community, where all can belong and participate, exists. She underlines however, that all other forms of citizenship are defined by who does and who does not belong. Parekh (2003) argues that we should rather talk about "globally oriented national citizens", who exercise their responsibilities as democratic citizens and challenge nationalistic policies that are against the interests of all humanity. These citizens act on different scales to discharge duties to global others, and yet the definition does not contradict with the current laws on national citizenship. However, it includes a dependence on an "imagined community" too, as it assumes that people share the same human values, such as humanitarianism, justice and nonviolence (Parekh 2003).

Matthews & Sidhu (2005) point out that cosmopolitanism includes banal forms that are far from globally oriented citizenship that includes awareness of global issues and extending ethical and moral commitments to a global community. Banal cosmopolitanism can be limited to acts such as the consumption of global brands, icons, peoples, heroes, public figures, foreign travel and multicultural food (Matthews & Sidhu 2005). There are also scholars who view the nation-states so far the most functional instruments for action, and criticize global citizenship as elitist. Kjeldstadli (2014) for example views that nations are also able to develop as embracing unity in diversity. Rebecca Tiessen (2011) argues that to be able to obtain an actually "global" perspective



of global citizenship, more has to be brought in from other parts of the world, as now it is mostly the Westerners that identify with it and use the concept in a Western way, many times as an extension of national citizenship.

## **2.5. Identity Production Through Global Citizenship Education**

Global citizenship education has emerged as a response to the assumption that a shift of identity towards global thinking is required (Pashby 2011). It has been for example included increasingly to school curriculums around the world, as well as promoted through non-governmental organizations (Andreotti & Souza 2012). As well as global citizenship, its education has multiple different meanings and agendas (Andreotti & Souza 2012).

Many have questioned, whether global citizenship is available for everybody, and whether the identity of a global citizen can form in all kinds of spaces, places and subjectivities. According to Mau (2010) especially experiences that are collected during youth are central in determining how one later engages in transnational activity. Jefferess (2012) has observed that ethics of global citizenship education are still tied to constructing images of actors that help others in need. Lappalainen & Rajander (2005) have argued that global citizenship as a discursive place is primarily available for those whose position in social hierarchies is privileged, and that educating international citizens could also be a national project. Mau (2010) for example notes that many national governments promote internationalization of their education systems, hoping that their citizens would be willing to participate in the developing “knowledge society”. According to Mau (2010) experiences of student mobility provide the youth with skills and contacts which are expected to lead them towards transnational activities.

Andreotti & Souza (2012) question the global ethnocentric hegemonies of global citizenship education. They point out that the literature and theory available comes mainly from England, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, which needs to be taken into account when talking about the subject. As they underline, “much critical work needs to be done to investigate how an agenda for global citizenship education, while it could be identified as a postcolonial move, is still very much implicated in the colonial legacy of education” (Andreotti & Souza 2012).

Global citizenship education has found its way to the advertisements of most organizations offering study abroad (Streitwieser & Light 2009). Streitwieser & Light (2009) underline that the definition of global citizenship is rarely explained by the organizations and that the outcomes of the study abroad are usually not measured in line with the concept. Matthews & Sidhu (2005) argue that international education most likely produces neo-liberal variants of global subjectivity. They continue that international education does not guarantee to generate collective and compassionate global subjects. It could also give rise to conservative ethnocultural affiliations (Matthews & Sidhu 2005).

In this chapter I have observed the hegemonic narratives that according to several scholars are shifting from national towards global. I have especially focused on the effects of these narratives to individual's worldviews and identities from the aspect of given meanings, values and belonging, and used the concepts of place and citizenship as examples that reflect the shift of narratives. In addition, I have questioned the shift with the help of scholars who have criticized the normalization of stability, and equally considered the aspects of mobility, fluidity, flexibility and change as "normal" states of the world. Finally, I have briefly examined how global citizenship education aims to respond to the change of worldviews and identities. In the following chapter, I will proceed to the contextual background that takes a closer look at the nation-state of Kenya, the city of Nairobi, and the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Program which provides transnational experiences to the youth in different countries.

### **3. Contextual Background**

#### **3.1. Experiencing Changes in Kenya**

The currently-known state of Kenya (figure 1) became independent in 1963, ending the rule of British Empire in the East Africa Protectorate. Before that, the land area that all the other nations of the world nowadays recognize as Kenya, has experienced many different forms of human activity (Ochieng 1985). Scientists have found signs, such as skulls, skeletons and tools, of early species of homo that date back to more than one million years in the Early Stone Age (Shipton 2011). Groups of hunters, gatherers and fishers inhabited the lands before the arrival of pastoralists and mixed farmers towards the Iron Age (Ochieng 1985). First city-states in the area began to form

in the coast during the first century of the Common Era by the Swahili cultures, who traded with Arabs (Spear 2000). Before colonization in 1895, the coastal region bordering Indian Ocean was under the Arab sultan of Oman and prior to that under Portuguese rule. The interior of the current territory of the country had a variety of Bantu, Nilo-Saharan, and Afro-Asiatic groups living in the region (Ochieng 1985).



Figure 1. An index map of Kenya, a nation-state in Eastern Africa along the Equator.

Kenya has been a republic for a bit over 50 years now, and during that time four presidents have served the country, the current president being Uhuru Kenyatta, the son of the first president Jomo Kenyatta. Kenya was under President Daniel arap Moi's rule for over 20 years, after which the first free elections were held in 2002 (SAHO 2016). The Kenyan constitution has been majorly reformed two times, the biggest changes being a shift from federal to unitary system, and a change from parliamentary to semi-presidential system. After the new constitution was passed in 2010, Kenya is governed in national and county levels. Also, the citizens who apply for a foreign citizenship, will not lose the Kenyan citizenship and vice versa. (Chitere et al. 2006; Akech 2010).

Kenya is described as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society with an estimation of 47 to 51 million inhabitants (IOM 2015; UN 2017; World Population Review 2018). Ethnic background has been important, and at times a source of conflicts for example in politics throughout the modern history of Kenya (SAHO 2016). Depending on the source, there are around 40 to 50 different ethnicities in Kenya. Many groups speak their own mother tongue, but the official languages of Kenya are English and Swahili. The majority of Kenyans are Christians, Islam being the second biggest religion (CIA 2018).

Kenya receives immigrants mostly from other countries of East Africa, out of which around 1/3 are refugees, the biggest numbers coming from the neighboring Somalia and South Sudan. The non-refugee immigrants seek education and employment opportunities (IOM 2015). Kenyans on the other hand emigrate because of similar reasons, major destinations being the United Kingdom and the United States of America. According to IOM (2015), more Kenyans emigrate than the country receives immigrants. Most emigrants are from Nairobi or the surrounding metropolitan area, and a drawback to the country is that the emigration consists especially from highly skilled people, almost 70% being between ages 19 and 35 (IOM 2015).

Kenya is described as “the economic, financial and transport hub of East Africa” (CIA 2018). Of late, the Gross Domestic Product has grown about 5% each year and Kenya ranks as a lower middle-income country, even though it rates 188<sup>th</sup> out of 229 countries in GDP (PPP) per capita, it being \$3500 in 2017 (CIA 2018; World Bank 2018). The household income of the highest 10% of the population is about 38% by percentage share, as for the lowest 10% it is less than 2%. 36% of the population lives below the poverty line (CIA 2018). Kenya ranks 142<sup>th</sup> out

of 189 countries in the Human Development Index, placing in the category of medium human development (UNDP 2018).

According to the World Factbook (CIA 2018), 59% of the Kenyan population is under 25 years old, making Kenya a comparatively young society. Unemployment rate remains high especially among the youth, as it is almost a double compared to the adult unemployment rate in each province (UNDP 2013). Most of the labor force works in the sector of agriculture, even though almost half of the GDP composition comes from the services sector (CIA 2018). Weak governance and corruption are among the major factors that prohibit equality among the inhabitants of the country. In 2017, Kenya ranked 17<sup>th</sup> fragile out of 178 countries on the Fragile State Index and 148<sup>th</sup> corrupted out of 180 countries in the Corruption Perceptions Index (Fund for Peace 2018; Transparency International 2018). Kenya participates in many international organizations, such as the United Nations, African Union, Commonwealth and World Trade Organization just to name a few (CIA 2018).

Around 40% of the population in Kenya has secondary education, and around 10% has tertiary education. There are wide regional differences, Nairobi having the highest ratio while North-Eastern part of Kenya remains having the lowest ratio. Especially in tertiary education there is a wide gap between Nairobi and the rest of the country, as over 25% have tertiary education in Nairobi, all other regions remaining at around 10% or less (NCPD 2013). According to the National Council for Population and Development (NCPD 2013), primary and secondary education have no tuition fees. Tertiary education uses a dual-track tuition fee policy, giving full state-support to students who perform well enough academically, but allowing other students to be admitted after paying a fee (Johnstone 2004).

The Kenyan education curriculum was recently renewed, and schools started teaching according to the new system in 2017. The new curriculum enhances peace and global citizenship education more than the previous ones and focuses on competences such as knowledge, skills and values instead of content and competition (Kangathe 2017; Omar 2018).

Kenya is urbanizing rapidly but is still under-urbanized compared to several other countries. According to the Kenya Urbanization Review, around 27% of the population in Kenya lives in the cities, and the population is urbanizing with an estimated speed of 4% between 2010 and 2020

(World Bank 2016). There is a growing middle class resulting from the economic growth and urbanization (figure 2). According to a United Nations Development Programme discussion paper (UNDP 2013) there is a tendency of young people migrating to Nairobi. Therefore, as well as because my research concentrates in the Nairobi region, I will take a closer look at the capital of Kenya.



Figure 2. Signs of urbanization in Kenya: the growing middle class increases the number of vehicles and makes the lines longer for public transportation in Nairobi.

### 3.2. Multiple Images of Nairobi

Nairobi is a fairly young city established along the railway built from Mombasa to Lake Victoria by the colonizers between 1896 and 1901. The British administration assigned Nairobi as a capital in 1907, replacing the former capital Mombasa (Ochieng 1985). Before that, the Maasai and Kikuyu groups inhabited the lands but the white settlers displaced them (Commonwealth Secretariat 2018). During colonization, Africans could not own land and thus informally settled in the unoccupied parts of the city. Rodriguez-Torres (2010) suggests that this serves as a basis for the sense of insecurity, affecting the identity of many in the city even today. Nairobi remained as a capital when Kenya became independent.

Nowadays Nairobi is the largest city of Kenya and the largest urban center in East Africa with a population of around four million inhabitants (CIA 2018; IOM 2015). Nairobi receives the most



rural-to-urban, urban-to-urban, as well as international in-migration of all the Kenyan cities because of its education and employment opportunities (NCPD 2013). For example, the tertiary institutions that are popular amongst international students are all located in the Nairobi metropolitan area (IOM 2015).

Rodriguez-Torres (2010) describes the city as a fragmented, highly paradoxical city of multiple identities, having large informal residential areas on the other hand and being a political and economic center of the country on the other (figure 3). According to (Myers 2015) the leaders of Kenya envisage Nairobi as a “world-class city region” by 2030. Many describe the city as the East African hub, as it is home for an innovative banking sector in the East African region (World Bank 2016). What comes to civil society activities, Nairobi is the world’s most connected city in non-governmental organizations’ activities (Taylor 2004). It also hosts international agencies’ headquarters, such as the United Nations Environment Programme as well as the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, which attracts international immigrants to the city (IOM 2015; UN 2018).



Figure 3. Different types of areas and identities of Nairobi.

Nairobi is the economic driver of Kenya, and 10 out of 25 largest urban areas of the country are located in the Nairobi metropolitan area, serving as satellite towns around the capital (World Bank 2016). The Nairobi metropolitan area has the largest share of employment and generates 35% of the national GDP. It has for example a 50% share in the construction activities of Kenya and 42% of all manufacturing activities (World Bank 2016). Nairobi is one of Kenya’s global gateway cities, and the airport has most passengers per annum of all airports in Kenya (World Bank 2016).

It is however to be remembered that not everyone in the city gets an equal part in the vision of the leaders, and Myers (2015) criticizes that the informal settlements are not at all addressed in the 2030 plan. According to him, there is a gap between the elite's visions and the ordinary city residents. For example, the housing prices are among the highest of African cities and most of the migrants find their place in the informal settlements (IOM 2015). In addition, Nairobi hosts the largest number of urban refugees in Kenya, out of which most reside in the informal settlements (IOM 2015).

As we can see, the city appears differently for each of its inhabitant and passer-by. There are signs of globalization, but the flows and transactions do not touch everyone with the same intensity. Nevertheless, various opportunities continuously attract people to the capital city.

### **3.3. Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Program**

The Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program awards scholarships for high school students from countries with significant Muslim populations to spend up to one academic year in the United States (YES Programs 2018a). The United States Congress established the program in 2002 as a response to the attacks of September 11, 2001. It is funded by the United States Department of State and sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). All the YES participants live in selected host families and attend school in their host communities. In addition, a minimum of 50 hours of community service is required during the program (AIFS Foundation 2015).

So far, the YES program is functioning or has previously functioned in 45 countries. The program seeks to encourage the participation of students with diverse national, ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds, and supports students with disabilities (ECA 2016). The students are selected through an application process including multiple rounds. First, they have to meet certain criteria including age between 15 and 17.6, enrollment in a secondary school, and an average of a B or higher without failing grades. In addition, they must meet United States J-1 visa eligibility requirements. Furthermore, the application process includes an English proficiency exam, writing a proctored essay, completing a YES application, and participating in an interview (YES Programs 2018b).



In the context of international secondary students in the United States, the YES program is a unique one. The United States is among the main destinations of international secondary school students, but according to a report of the Institute of International Education, only 2.5% of the international secondary school students in USA were from Africa or the Middle East in 2016 (figure 4). Kenya is included in the East African students who represented 0.7% of all international students in the United States in 2016 (Farrugia 2017). In addition, most of the students are diploma-seeking participants with F-1 visa, whereas the YES students enroll with the J-1 visa. The report states that scholarships are rarely available at the secondary level, whereas all the YES participants get a scholarship. If the data of Farrugia (2017) is accurate, the YES participants are the only Kenyan secondary school students with a J-1 visa that stay each year in the United States, which makes the group of YES alumni that I am researching a unique one.

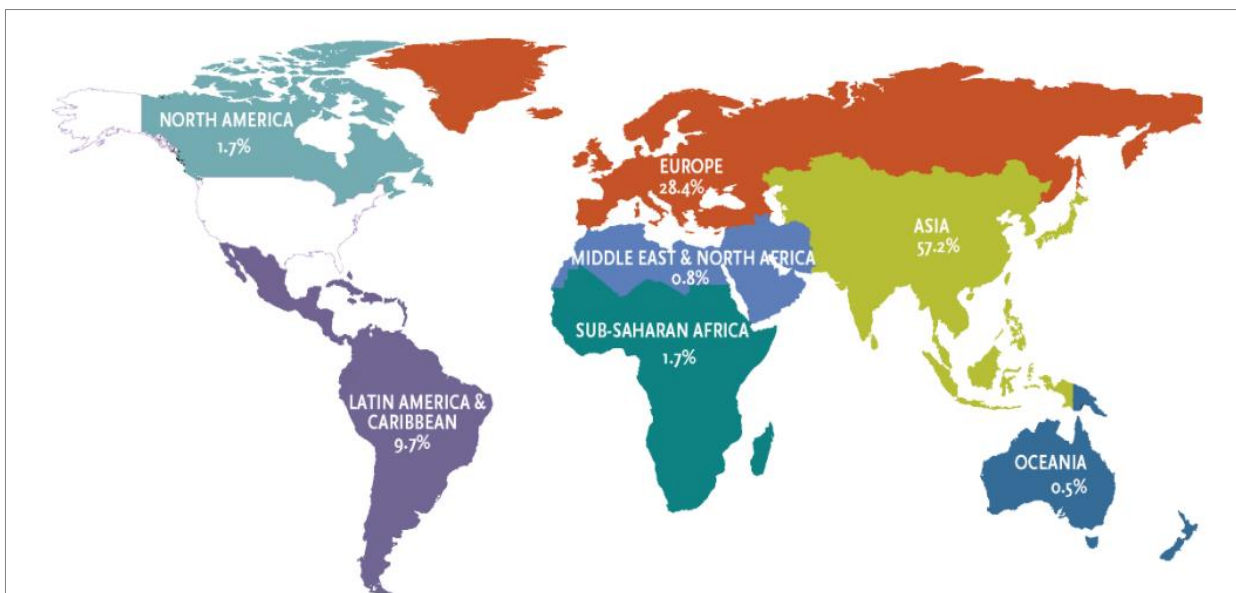


Figure 4. Sources of international secondary students in the United States by world region, 2013 (Farrugia 2017).

### 3.3.1. YES Program Goals

According to ECA (2016), the goals of the YES program are "to promote better understanding by youth from the United States and selected countries about host society, people, institutions, values, and culture; to foster lasting personal and professional ties; to advance mutual understanding, respect for diversity, leadership skills, and understanding of civil society during the exchange experience and beyond; and, to enhance understanding of other countries and cultures and increase accurate understanding of American values in communities abroad".

An evaluation of the impacts of the exchange experience in YES program was conducted in 2009. It measured that during the program the students had achieved "a deepened and more nuanced understanding of the United States, their own countries, as well as the roles and rights of individuals in society; greater tolerance for other peoples and cultures; much improved leadership and communication skills, and a sense of empowerment that they can affect change in their communities and beyond" (InterMedia 2009). The benefits of the program were still visible one year after the students had returned to their home countries.

It should be noted that the potential candidates are selected from the aspect of the program's goals. According to the evaluation of the impact of the YES program, the students arrive to the United States already with relatively high skills and knowledge for their age. Yet they are able to develop these skills and learn new things during their stay (InterMedia 2009). One could however question whether it is exactly because of their high skills that the students are able to achieve the goals of the program.

### **3.3.2. YES Alumni Community**

After the exchange year, the YES participants have the possibility to join a global alumni community, where they are encouraged to build on their skills and start doing volunteer work in their own communities. The alumni community forms a network of the YES program's students in different countries. Currently, over 10,000 alumni have joined the community. There are YES alumni activities or groups in various social media platforms, and the YES program webpage regularly publishes stories written by the alumni (YES Programs 2018c). Furthermore, there is a possibility for alumni grants that the participants may apply each year for their own projects.

The aim of the alumni program is to expand the skills the students have learned during their exchange year and use the knowledge and skills they have developed for the benefit of their home countries (iEARN-USA 2018). According to the evaluation of the impacts of the YES program, approximately 80 percent of the participants were eager to put their skills into action in their home communities, and had committed some community service (InterMedia 2009).

Ashleigh Caws (2016) focuses on the post program involvement of the former YES students in her study, paying special attention to volunteering and community service. The results show that most of the YES program participants join the YES alumni program after their exchange year in the

United States. As alumni, they strongly participate in different types of volunteering activities, the highest percentage of the initiatives being related to education, environment and fundraising.

### **3.3.3. YES Program in Kenya**

The YES program is administered in partnership with different non-profit organizations depending on the YES country. In Kenya it is managed by AFS Kenya – Organization for Intercultural Education (OFIE) together with the local United States Embassy, Public Affairs Office (YES Programs 2018b). The program was officially launched in 2008 in Kenya, and according to the YES Programs (2018b), around 180 students have participated so far. Each year around 20 participants are awarded the scholarship (ECA 2016; Omar 2018). The students may choose to participate as alumni after their program abroad has finished (ECA 2016).

The organization functions in Kenya with ten chapters based in Mombasa, Malindi, Lamu, Taita, Kajiado, Nairobi, Narok, Mt. Kenya region, Kisumu and Bungoma (figure 5). The office is based in Mombasa. According to the Director of AFS Kenya, Athman Lali Omar (2018), students are selected through schools in each chapter and around 200 of them begin the application process each year. The selection of the final students is done based on the YES program criteria and aims for inclusion of students from diverse backgrounds (Omar 2018). According to Omar (2018), the northern parts of Kenya are not yet included due to lack of resources and unstable conditions in the counties. The YES program and especially the alumni activities in Kenya are firmly coordinated through AFS Kenya. The alumni activities include for example community service in the local societies, alumni grant projects, global citizenship education, accommodating foreign students in Kenya and domestic exchange between participants from different regions in Kenya to build bridges between the youth from different ethnic backgrounds (Omar 2018).

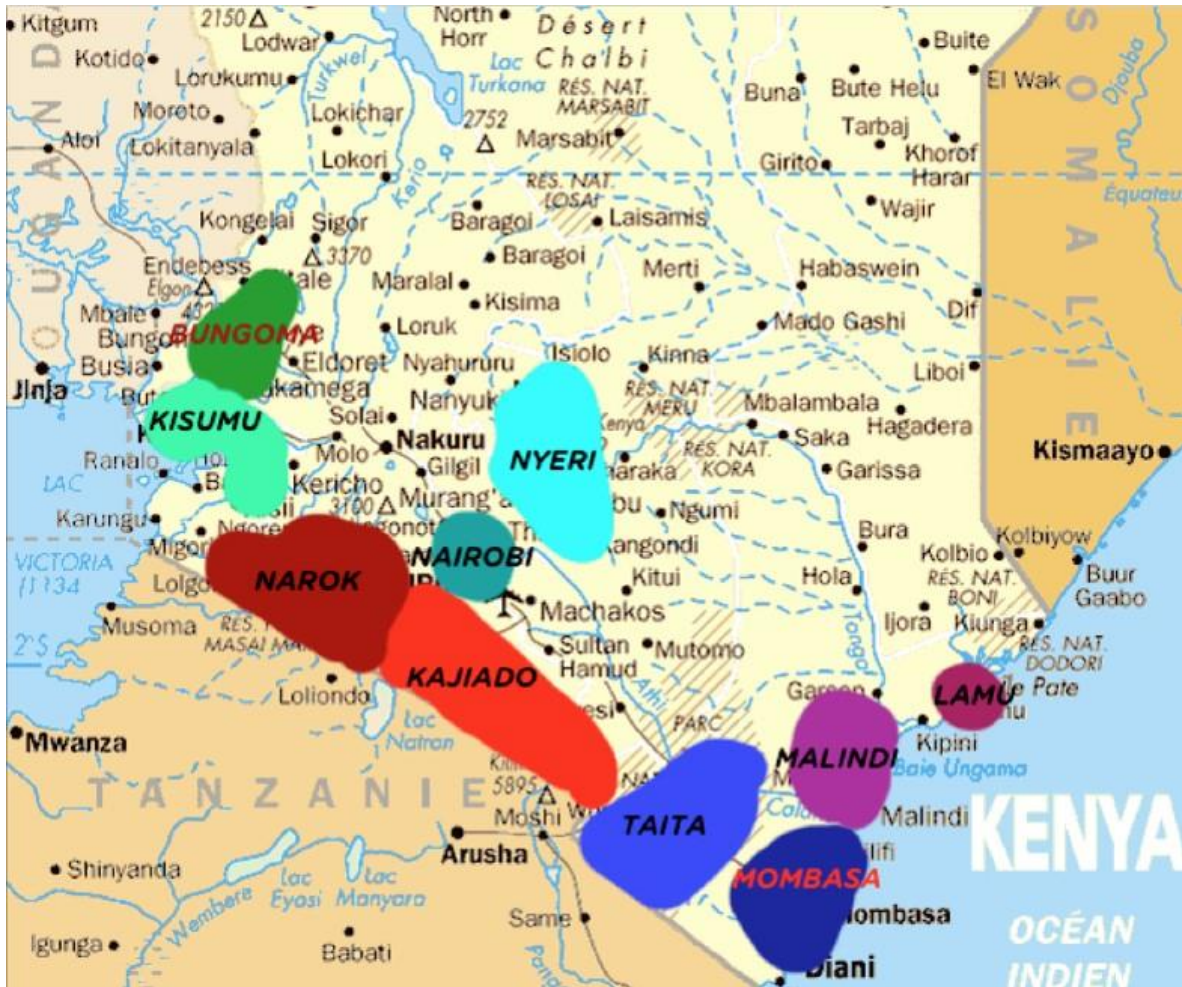


Figure 5. The local chapters of AFS Kenya/OFIE (AFS Kenya 2016).

### 3.4. Meaning of Contextual Background

The contextual background of Kenya, Nairobi, and the YES program is important, as it connects the participants of my research. They are all citizens of Kenya, and influence currently in the Nairobi region. All of them share the experience of the YES program, yet no experience is the same. The contextual background serves as one possible factor that can be considered when analyzing the given meanings, values and activities of the participants. It should also be noted that this is just one way to delineate the study, and other contexts such as youth or tertiary students could have been selected to observation.

I consider the Kenyan context in the research especially through Kenyan citizenship, as it legally binds the participants and has affected their backgrounds for example through school curriculums and other policies of the Kenyan government. The context of Nairobi is important as the empirical

part of the research was conducted in Nairobi and its surroundings. The participants either live or influence in the Nairobi region in one way or another. The particularity of exchange programs from the aspect of transnationalism is that they have a clear beginning and an end. No other citizenship rights are granted to the participant than any other visitor when going abroad. I understand the YES program in this research as a ten-month long voluntary transnational experience that could possibly influence the participants also after the transnational part of their experience has ended.

## **4. Research Design**

A multimethod design of qualitative approaches was used to collect the data, which means getting information related to the research case with different qualitative methods (Brewer & Hunter 2006). The research does not fall directly under a single methodology but uses aspects of few different approaches. I used both primary and secondary data in the empirical part of my research. The methods for collecting the primary data were individual and pair interviews, an expert interview, observation, and a focus group session. Public documents found online were used as secondary data to get enough background and contextual information for the research. Coding and qualitative content analysis were applied when analyzing the primary data.

### **4.1. Research Methodology**

As my research aims for a holistic understanding about the role of the Nairobi region YES alumni, it does not fall directly under any research methodology. It combines phenomenological-hermeneutical, as well as phenomenographic and ethnographic approaches. According to Laine (2015), experience, meaning and sense of community are the core concepts of the phenomenological-hermeneutical tradition. Especially existential phenomenology treats humans as active subjects, which has been common amongst humanist geographers (Paasi 1983). In phenomenological research, individuals are at the center of focus and they are treated as both products and producers in the surrounding world (Laine 2015). Laine adds that even though research is then limited to what is experienced by individuals, they are still acknowledged as social beings.

Laine explains that meanings are also central, as experiences are based on them. Meanings are born for example as individual grows as part of communities (Laine 2015). According to him, phenomenological-hermeneutically oriented researcher aims to understand the world of meanings that a certain group is living in a specific moment. Hermeneutically oriented research also differs from many other aspects of science as it is interested in uniqueness instead of only generalizing and finding regularities (Laine 2015). This kind of research focuses on the expressions of individuals as the expressions carry meanings. Laine (2015) reminds that the expressions cannot be taken as facts, so the meanings can only be approached by understanding and interpreting. Thus, the research is carried out on two levels: first the participant expresses their experiences or their understanding of experiences as naturally as possible and secondly the researcher aims to conceptualize the meanings and bring the experienced into consciousness (Laine 2015).

Phenomenographic research focuses more on perceptions that the participants may have about certain concepts and aims to describe them (Metsämuuronen 2008). Metsämuuronen (2008) reminds that the perceptions can only be researched during certain moments, as they are constantly changing. Lastly, Crang & Cook (2007) list participant observation, semi-structured and in-depth interviews as well as focus groups as the primary means in ethnographic research. They note that none of the methods should be treated as a separate means to do research but combining different approaches that help answering the research questions will construct understandings together.

I combine the different approaches in my research to reach a holistic understanding. The Nairobi region YES alumni are at the center of my focus, whose experience and meanings I aim to interpret through themes related to their activities and identities. In addition, the research includes concepts that the participants may interpret differently. The research therefore focuses on the participants' perceptions about certain concepts as well, as the responses may explain their expressions better. Combining various methods recommended by ethnographic researchers assists me in constructing more complete understandings.

## **4.2. Materials**

Various materials were used as primary and secondary data in my research. Primary data was collected directly from the YES alumni through interviews, observation and a focus group. An expert interview was also conducted, as well as control group interviews. Additional secondary

data was searched mainly through online sources. There were 22 participants in total in the individual and pair interviews, of which 20 participated in an individual interview and two participated in a pair interview. The requirements for the participants were that they are 18 years or older and have attended the YES program. The requirement for the control group was that they have not participated in any exchange program or lived abroad.

The transcribed material contains a total of 235 pages of data from 17 participants. One interview was left out as the participant was an AFS alumnus but not a YES alumnus and thus had participated in a different exchange program in a different country than all the other participants. The control group interviews (n=4) were not transcribed, as they were used only for qualitative comparison to find out if there were any visible differences in their answers. One of the control group interviews was not used for comparison, as after the interview I found out that they had not been speaking the truth during the interview. An expert interview was conducted with Mr. Athman Lali Omar, the Director of AFS Kenya, to get a broader perspective of the AFS and YES programs and alumni activities in Kenya. A focus group session was held with available participants after all the interviews were completed. In addition, I had the possibility to join a volunteering event with the participants which allowed me to observe and get more knowledge about the alumni activities. The expert interview and the focus group session were not fully transcribed, as they served as supplementary data for the analysis.

Public documents about the YES program were used as contextual background information. Especially the goals of the program were used and analyzed to formulate the themes of the interview questions, theoretical background, and compared to the answers of the alumni. In addition, information about the content of the program was used to better understand the background.

Nairobi was selected as the fieldwork site as it was easily accessible from Helsinki, and because my contacts in Kenya suggested that many of the active YES alumni influence in Nairobi and its surroundings. The contacts were also able to arrange accommodation. Kenya was selected as a destination because of my own interest towards the African continent as a researcher, and because it provided the best contacts of all the YES program countries in Africa.

### **4.3. Methods for Collecting the Primary Data**

#### **4.3.1. Individual and Pair Interviews**

All the interviews were conducted in Nairobi and its surroundings between April and July 2018. Prior to that, I had conducted three practice interviews in Helsinki, Finland. Two of them were Finnish exchange student alumni and one represented the control group. In Nairobi, I conducted another test interview with the YES alumnus who had helped me in the research licensing process. I modified the interview themes and questions after each test interview, as they helped me to estimate what a suitable number of themes was and how to make the questions simple and understandable. The themes were not modified anymore after the test interview in Nairobi, and thus the interview could be included in the final data.

I had prepared an email inquiry to approach the YES alumni, but it turned out to be a very slow channel for reaching the possible participants. A better way turned out to be via a mobile device application WhatsApp. There was a group for the Nairobi region YES and AFS alumni, where most of the alumni had joined after their return from the United States. There was also a slight snowballing effect when reaching the participants, as some participants were inviting other alumni to contact me and have an interview as well. Most participants however signed up through the WhatsApp group.

As the total number of Kenyan YES alumni between the years 2008 and 2018 is around 180 (Omar 2018, YES Programs 2018b), I prepared to interview all the available participants. This turned out to be a good decision. As most of the participants were students or already working, their schedules were busy and continuously changing. Thus, it was possible to do a maximum of three interviews per week. Sometimes there were more interviews agreed for each week, but there were last-minute changes which forced us to often reschedule the agreed meetings. I also got a flu and lost my voice during the first month in Nairobi, so there was a period of few weeks that it was not possible to conduct any interviews.

The interviews were conducted in cafés, shopping malls, and other potentially quiet and calm places in Nairobi (figure 6). I always tried to agree a place that would be easy to reach for the participant. Usually the city center was the best option, but few participants also invited me to their homes in case they lived further away. In one home I stayed overnight, which allowed me to



observe and participate in the daily life of the participant (figure 6). Some of the interviews were also conducted in the house where I was staying in Nairobi, as the house was familiar to many of the participants due to volunteering events that had been previously held there. As most of the interviews were conducted in cafés, I estimated that it was reasonable to offer tea, coffee or another small snack to the participants during the interview. On the other hand, in case the interview was held in another place, such as participant's home, they often wanted to offer me lunch or something similar. The interviews were tape-recorded, and additional notes were written during each interview. I also wrote a memo about the complete interview the same day after each interview, including observations that could not be recorded.



Figure 6. Examples of interview sites and how to get there: having tea with a participant in one of the shopping malls in Nairobi, having an Iftar dinner in one participant's home during Ramadan, and travelling by matatu to meet another participant.

Most participants agreed to an individual interview, but two participants wanted to participate together, so one pair interview was conducted. I decided to allow that, as I estimated that the questions were not too sensitive and confirmed beforehand that both participants felt comfortable speaking in front of each other. I also estimated that there is a possibility that the participants might lead each other's answers to a certain direction, but in the best case the interview would only be richer as the participants might get more ideas from each other's answers.

According to Laine (2015), phenomenological interviews should be as open as possible, and the questions should allow participants to tell descriptive stories. The individual and pair interviews were semi-structured and built around four different themes: activities, future dreams and fears, citizenship, and identity (annex 1). There were some questions prepared beforehand under each theme, but during the interview more specific questions could be asked, aiming to understand the

reasons behind each answer. The selected themes were theory-driven, chosen partly based on literature and partly on my own interest on certain aspects as a researcher. In addition, I followed the guidelines of Laine (2015), who has recommended to identify, understand and interpret the expectations of the researcher when forming the research questions. The themes included phenomenological questions related to experiences of the participants, as well as phenomenographic questions about perceptions related to certain concepts, such as citizenship.

The interviews lasted approximately an hour, the shortest being 37 minutes and the longest one hour and 29 minutes. It could be noted that the average time of the interviews increased when approaching the end of the field research period. It can be argued that my interviewing skills developed during each interview and I learned to ask deeper and more specific questions towards the end, but it should also be noted that everyone who participated in the research had their own way of expressing themselves, and for example the speed of their speech varied. Around half of the audio data was transcribed already in Nairobi, and the rest of it was transcribed right away when returning to Helsinki. I transcribed everything by myself, which already gave a good understanding what the written data would contain.

#### **4.3.2. Observation**

According to Kiviniemi (2015), participatory observation is often an essential part of qualitative research, as it allows the researcher to get a better understanding of the field from the perspective of the participants. Almost everything that is experienced during the research, such as everyday conversations, may be valuable for the researcher Kiviniemi (2015).

Besides living in Nairobi for three months and observing the daily habits of the citizens, I also had the access to the WhatsApp group where the participants were planning their volunteering activities together. I had the chance to participate in one volunteering activity during my stay in Nairobi (figure 7). We visited a children's home for Muslim girls and shared an Iftar dinner with them during Ramadan. Around half of the interview participants were present in the event.



Figure 7. I had the possibility to take part in a volunteering activity of the YES alumni by visiting a children's home in Nairobi.

In addition, some participants ended up spending more time with me than just the interview, in case we were traveling towards the same direction and could pick the same means of public transportation, had time to walk around the city-center, or if I was invited to stay overnight in their home for example. These moments included coincidental discussions, as the participants were often open for conversations.

#### 4.3.3. Focus Group

After conducting the individual and pair interviews, I invited all the participants to a focus group session (figure 8). The idea was to discuss together some of the themes that I found especially interesting after the interviews. I selected three themes for further discussion that were citizenship, global citizenship and sense of belonging. Before the session I transcribed all the data under these themes and selected quotations from each interview to be discussed. Based on the quotations and literature I had previously been reading, I prepared specific questions under the three themes that could possibly take the discussion further.

Not all interview participants were able to attend the focus group session. However, those who could attend, wanted to invite other YES alumni to join. I decided to invite everyone who wanted to join, to see if any new aspects arise. Also, the quotations from the interviews were anonymous and all individual details were carefully removed from the text prior to the session. Before beginning the workshop, I also reminded everyone about the rules of the discussion. The rules included for example letting everyone speak in their turn, respecting everyone's argument even if they disagree with one's own, and not trying to guess whose quotations were being used.

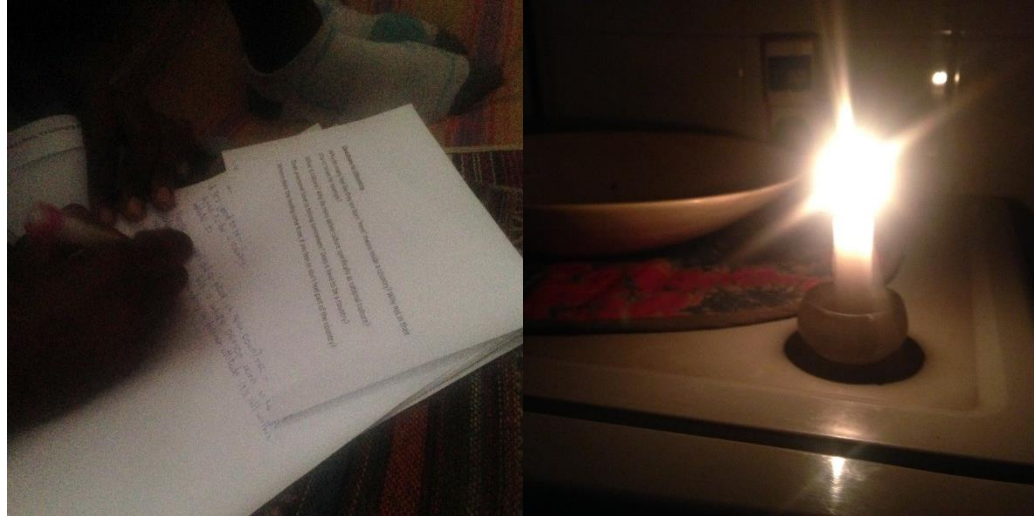


Figure 8. Writing down ideas in the focus group. The session was partly held in candlelight due to a power outage.

There were six people in the beginning of the session, so I divided the participants to two groups. Later more people joined as they arrived. In the end there were 12 people participating. Each group took approximately 40 minutes to discuss about each theme, and we had breaks between each session. The discussions were not recorded as not everybody felt comfortable arguing for their opinion, so I took notes and the group wrote their ideas down on a separate sheet of paper. In the end everyone who wanted to, could use the tape recorder to capture the most important thing they had learned during the workshop.

#### **4.4. Methods for Analyzing the Primary Data**

Most of the data analysis was conducted in Helsinki between July and September 2018, after returning from Nairobi. The first phase of the analysis included reading through the transcribed material and writing down themes that emerged from it. Of course, before that I had already listened through the audio data, read the memos and notes from the interviews, and read through the transcribed material once transcribing it. After all that, I begun the deeper analysis. The research was partly theory- and partly data-driven, as previously known theoretical concepts based on my interests were considered when forming the research questions and the final interview questions. During the analysis these concepts were in mind but also space was given for new themes and concepts to emerge from the data.

According to Kiviniemi (2015), qualitative research can be described as a learning process also for the researcher themselves, as the research evolves and changes throughout the process. The same might happen to the research questions and research methods. I stayed as open as possible to all meanings and aimed to deepen my theoretical knowledge throughout the research, so after each phase of the research as well as throughout the different phases of the analysis there were moments of critical reflection and reformulation of the goals of the research.

Qualitative content analysis and coding were selected as methods of analysis. Qualitative content analysis allows to systematically describe the meaning in qualitative material (Schreier 2012). Schreier (2012) recommends using coding as a help with qualitative content analysis, if the data is very varied and diverse. I first tried constructing a complete coding frame by dividing 15% of the data under different themes as Schreier suggests. After two trials I nevertheless realized that the data was so diverse that it was impossible to understand it through one frame. I therefore tried coding instead, which functioned better. However, clear main categories could be identified, under which it was possible to classify different codes. There were three aspects that I especially valued in the data: the meanings related to place, citizenship and belonging more broadly, the values of the participants related to the themes of the interviews as well as the reasons given for explaining changes (figure 9).

For coding, I used Atlas.ti, which is a qualitative data analysis software. Most of the codes were assigned under the three main categories. Additional topical codes were used in separate categories to keep track of the different themes such as activities, dreams and fears, which helped forming a picture about the participants and served as additional background information (Bazeley 2013). Later, I constructed a case-based matrix of the background questions that the participants had responded (annex 2) and included some of the topical codes in there as well. Subcategories started forming along the way under the main categories, which allowed me to construct code families. During coding, the code families and codes themselves were continually revised and modified in case of overlapping or other anomalies. I used memos to keep track of the changes and explain each decision to myself, to ensure consistency (Bazeley 2013). As Bazeley (2013) suggests, memos were also used to describe the meaning of the codes. At times, I also reflected my choices with the theoretical background.

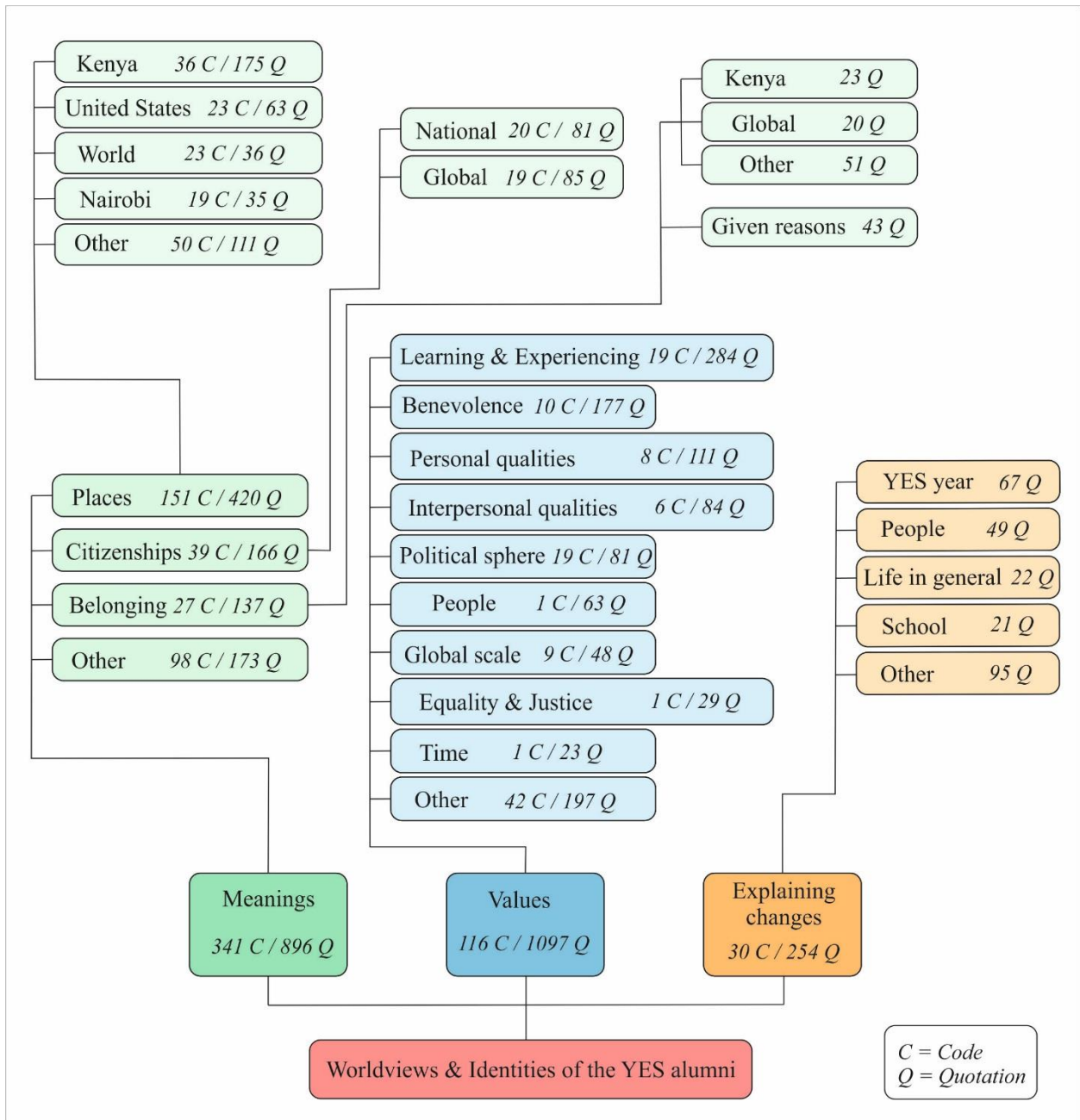


Figure 9. The main categories used in the data analysis, as well as the amounts of codes and quotations in each category and subcategory.

When finishing coding, I still needed to revise and modify, as some codes were not assigned to any code family. I also created a miscellaneous subcategory for codes that did not relate to any of the other subcategories. Also, there were some overlapping codes that needed to be merged under each code family. After all the codes seemed to have found their place, it was time to observe the final structure of the categories. All quotations were now linked to one or two codes. The same quotation



could not be used twice in the same subcategory, to keep consistency (Schreier 2012). Each code was under one code family, forming the subcategories for the three main categories that were selected in the beginning to respond to the research questions. Figure 10 provides an example of this hierarchy.

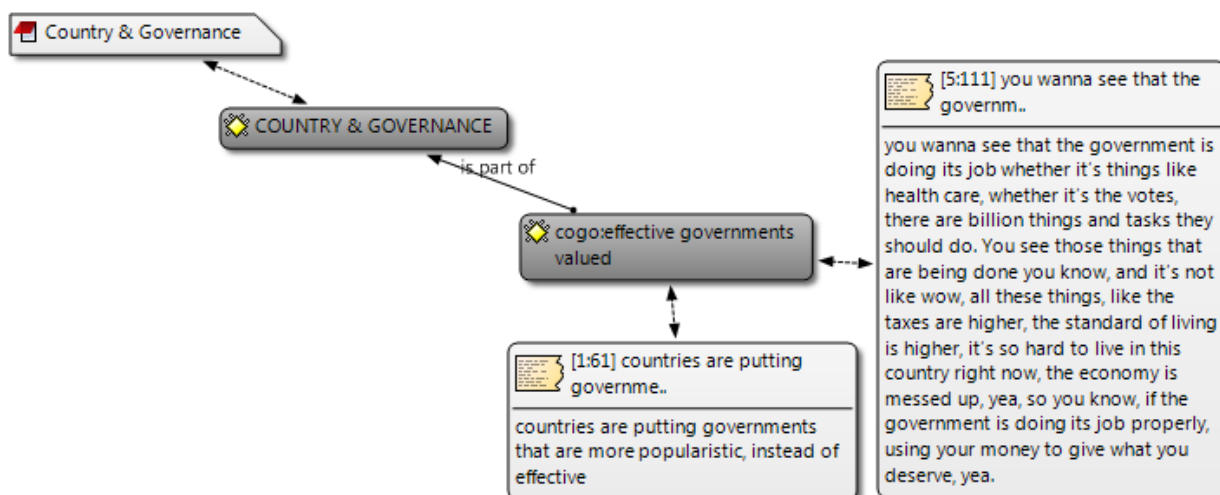


Figure 10. Example of organizing the data in the network view of Atlas.ti. From left to right: memo, code family, code, quotations.

The structure provided a good overview of all the aspects that had emerged from the data, but it was still possible to analyze the data more deeply. Schreier (2012) also reminds that qualitative content analysis is good for organizing the data, but the analysis should not end at that point. I started observing the data first by quantitative means, as Atlas.ti showed the amounts of quotations and codes assigned to each category. I began the deeper observation from the codes and code families that had the most quotations, as they seemed to be aspects that had the strongest emergence in the data. The families with only few quotations could be left for less observation.

Atlas.ti had a network tool that allowed to observe each code family in one's own network view (figure 11). This allowed me to organize the codes in different orders and draw links from one code to another. I organized the codes in each view in a way that the codes relating more with each other and being thematically more similar were organized closer to each other. At this point it was still possible to merge codes in case they were overlapping. After organizing the codes in the network view, the view allowed to open the quotations and memos that were linked to each code (figure

12). The same kind of organizing process that I had previously done to all codes under each code family could be done to the quotations under each code. I always began the analysis from the code that had most quotations and worked from there towards the codes with less amounts of quotations. For example, one of the biggest code families was “explaining changes” having 30 codes and 254 quotations. Inside that code family, I observed that “YES year” was the code with the most quotations. In addition, I could simultaneously do quantitative observation in a case-based way, paying attention to how many participants had been discussing about the same issue under each code. Most importantly, I could consider the difference in case everyone or just a few participants had quotations under a specific code.

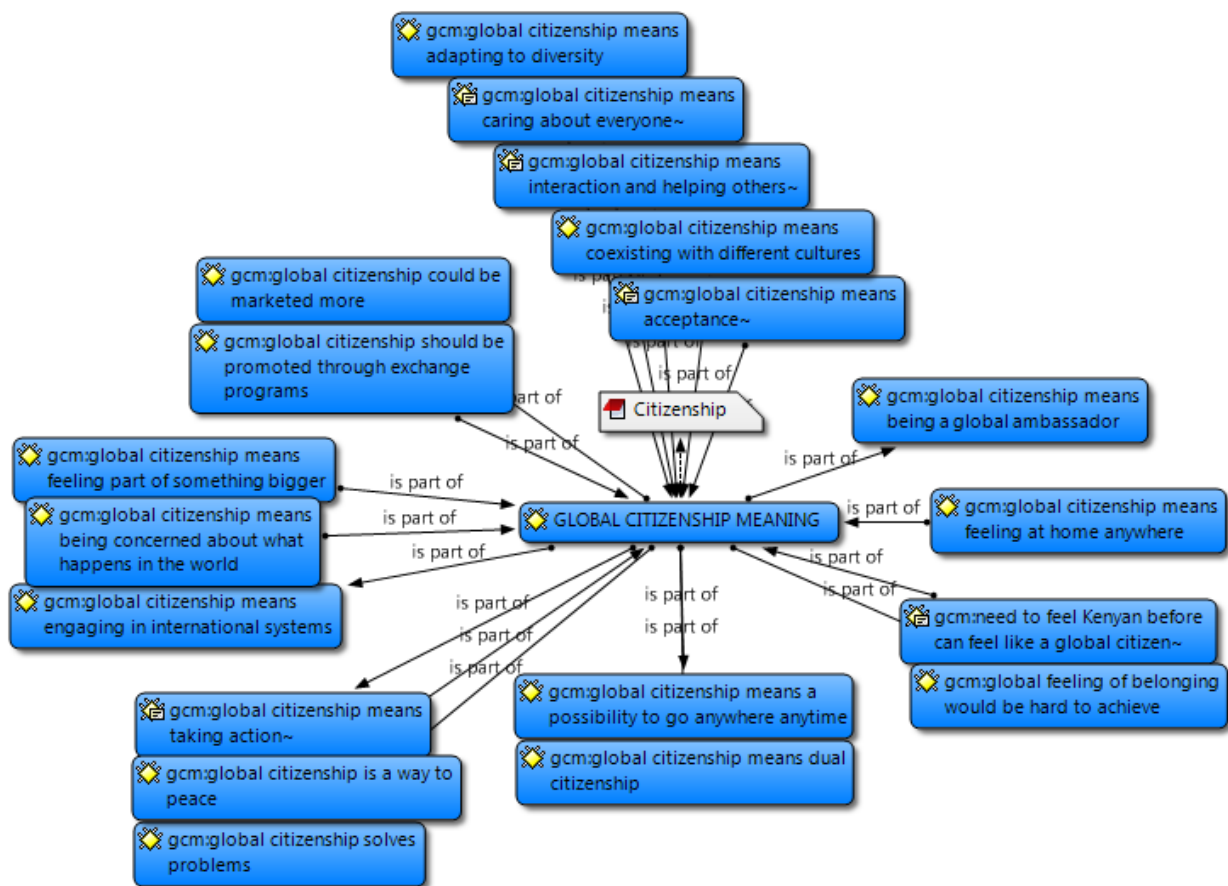


Figure 11. Example of a network view of a single code family in Atlas.ti. The codes are grouped closer to each other in case they are interpreted having a stronger relation with each other.



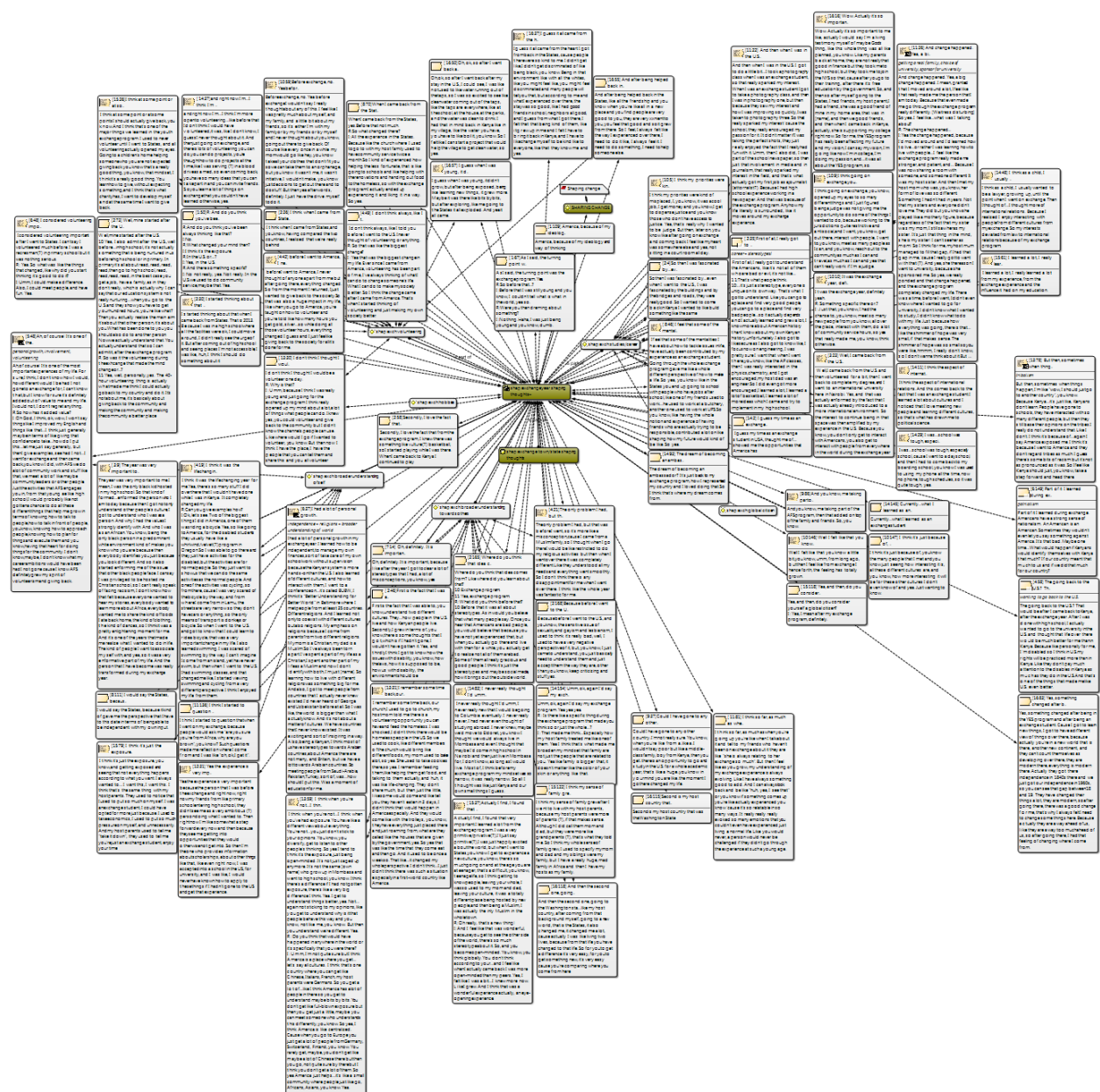


Figure 12. Example of quotations of a single code opened in the network view of Atlas.ti and grouped into smaller subcategories in case they are interpreted relating to each other.

I wrote my observations to a separate memo under each code family. The memos served later as the basis for writing about the results of the research. The further I proceeded, the more important it was that I had taken notes on the memos and written comments on certain codes. That allowed me to observe if there was any overlapping between different subcategories. It also allowed me to link similar thoughts from different categories together in the results even though they were

separated in the coding process. However, in this kind of linking I had to be careful to remember there had also been a reason why some codes had been in different subcategories, to not get confused with different angles and overanalyze my data.

#### **4.5. Ethical and Methodological Considerations**

As in all research, some ethical and methodological considerations had to be kept in mind during the research and should be considered when interpreting the results of this master's thesis. First, a research permit was required to conduct research in Kenya (annex 3). It was admitted by the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and required an ethical review statement from the University of Helsinki Ethical review board in humanities and social and behavioral sciences. Also, an information letter and consent form to the participants of the research were required (annexes 4 and 5). The forms explained the rights of the participant, as well as the purpose of the research. In addition, the governor of the Nairobi county had to be informed before commencing the fieldwork, and an affiliation from a Kenyan tertiary institution was required. United States International University - Africa affiliated my research.

There were different ways that I used to protect the anonymity of the participants. These included a plan for storing and managing the data safely. Each participant read and signed a consent form before the interview that explained the purpose of the study. I kept the consent forms in a locked drawer, and they are destroyed when the research is published. The audio data was stored in the tape recorder and a flash drive. The transcribed data was stored in a locked file in my personal computer. All the data will be destroyed when the research is published.

When transcribing the data, all direct identifications were removed from the data and replaced by a general term that could be used to describe the replaced object so that the meaning would not be lost. Also, during the final step of writing the results of the thesis, anonymity of the participants had to be considered so that no quotation could reveal the identity of the participant, not even through any non-direct ways of identification. For example, if there was only one participant with a certain background, the quotation could not be used because other participants could possibly recognize that specific participant based on the quotation.

As the research was a qualitative one, it consisted of a small number of people, concentrating on the uniqueness of the group of participants. Thus, the results cannot be generalized to interpret perspectives of a broader group (Schreier 2012). However, the YES alumni in Kenya are not a very large group in general, and the participants of my research represent approximately 9% of all the Kenyan YES alumni. This is a good percentage, but it should however be noted that the alumni who participated in the interviews appeared to be the most active alumni in general. They for example organized most of the events and discussed most actively in the WhatsApp group. In addition, the alumni who participated in the research were active in the Nairobi region, which might differ from the activities of the Kenyan YES alumni in other regions. Thus, careful attention must be paid when interpreting the results. There was no real saturation point regarding the interviews, as the questions were both very broad and simultaneously quite individual. However, I realized that the more interviews I conducted, the less unique responses I received. Nevertheless, there was always something new and surprising in each interview.

What made it interesting and more complex was that the participants of my research had not lived their whole childhood and youth in the same community or culture. Therefore the meanings that were being observed could have been born in various situations, communities and cultures. Thus, interpretation had to be done cautiously and conclusions drawn only based on participants own experiences, acknowledging that not all aspects may have emerged during the interviews. Another factor that had to be considered when planning the empirical part of the research was my own background as a researcher. On the other hand, I shared a similar experience as the participants as I had participated in a study abroad in the United States. Thus, I needed to be careful that I would not take certain experiences and meanings for granted, as they could feel familiar to me. On the other hand, I completed the research in cultural contexts that were previously unknown to me, which was a fruitful situation to find hidden meanings from the experiences of the participants. Crang & Cook (2007) recommend observation especially if the research happens in previously unknown cultural contexts, which is why the method was selected to complement my understanding.

Being from a different cultural context had also its benefits, as the participants were more eager to explain certain things clearly, as they were not sure that I had heard about them before. The Kenyan education system for example was a theme like this. However, it could have its downsides as well,

as the scale of explanation could change depending on who was listening. Why some categories emerged having the most codes and quotations can partly be explained by the participants' location of living, their age, and other similar factors. Education has for instance touched the lives of all the participants for the most part of their lives and many of the participants are currently students, so it is almost self-evident that they talked about education a lot and had clear opinions about it.

Matthews & Sidhu (2005) note that many granted forms of identifications disregard intercultural parallels and take national differences for granted. They state that a critical and ironic distancing is necessary to interrogate nationalism. I acknowledge that this has been an issue throughout the thesis, as I have tried to avoid describing the participants primarily as Kenyans but may have still taken the national identification for granted when making comparisons between Kenya and abroad for example. Especially in my interview questions my own assumptions are visible: I directly assume, as most of the participants do as well, that citizenship is defined primarily as national citizenship. I also jump from there to a question about global citizenship, ignoring other scales and aspects of citizenship. However, it should be noted that there were participants who did not assume citizenship directly as national citizenship but started from global citizenship or brought county-level citizenship into discussion, for example. It also might have affected that the general question about belonging was only asked after the more specific questions of citizenship and belonging to different societies. Another option would have been to ask the general question beforehand.

The mixing of spatial and group identities of the participants is another thing that could have possibly been avoided by defining the concepts better during the interviews. Then again for example Kenyan identities overlap and relate with each other as Kenya was both citizenship and an important place to many, so in all cases it might have been difficult to separate. Citizenship was also a difficult concept to some of the participants. With a more exact definition there might have been less answers to that question. Now I had the possibility to interpret what the participant meant and categorize the definitions afterwards.

Billig (1996) notes that sometimes it may be difficult to find out the true attitude of participants as they might switch their argument or opinion during the interview. I solved this problem by asking multiple questions from different angles about the same issue, which revealed if the participants did not have a clear attitude or value towards something. However, there might be aspects that

remained hidden. As the whole data was gathered and analyzed by myself, the question of reliability emerges, as the data was interpreted by one person only (Schreier 2012). However, I had the possibility to test my interpretations when trying to find a good analyzing method for the transcribed data, as I analyzed the same 15% of data multiple times. I also asked a person that did not relate to my research in any way to read through the transcribed data and write down themes that in their opinion emerged from the data. That helped me reflecting the differences in my own thinking and realize the perspectives I was focusing on and which ones I had been neglecting.

What comes to secondary data and theoretical background, I would also have liked to use more perspectives from the Global South for example in my theoretical background, but most of the literature available was from the perspectives of the Global North. Or, if arguing from a non-spatial perspective, most, if not all literature used in the research was written by people who could be assigned to the new professional-managerial group of highly educated citizens of the world. This applies broadly to the research as another connecting factor between the participants and myself is that we have all continued our studies until tertiary education. We also use English as a common language and more specifically with an accent from the United States. These might be even stronger connecting factors between us than I thought in the beginning of the work of this thesis.

During the interviews, the participants got to self-reflect their worldviews and identities. But did this reflection during the interviews create a distance as Tuan (1979) suggested, so that the participants were able to bring something from the subconscious to conscious? It should be considered that the unexpected experiences of the participants may be overrepresented in the results over the daily activities. However, the unexpected events might be exactly the ones that have changed the worldviews of the participants the most.

Finally, it must be remembered that humanistic geography has received some general critique about its focus on the individual's aspect (Paasi 1983). Paasi (1983) notes that it is a common and relevant argument that not all actions are up to individuals own will. I have tried to take this into account during the research process but am aware that there are always certain assumptions and choices that must be made during the research. I have nevertheless stated the choices I have made, which allows the readers to take them into account when observing the results. As Kiviniemi (2015) notes, the researcher is never a "tabula rasa", but their theoretical perspectives, interests and the

surrounding environment always play a role in the direction that the research is taking. I understand that my own positionality as a researcher affects constantly to the interview situation, and possibly on whether the participants let me know about their interest to participate. The YES alumni clearly acknowledge that I as well have participated in a similar exchange program through the same international organization that administers the program in Kenya as well. Thus, they might not be fully open and honest when speaking about their experiences. However, as most of the questions were not about the exchange program, but more widely about the lives of the participants, the similar background of the research might be helpful, as the participants trust that the researcher can easily understand and possibly relate to their stories and examples. This might lead to deeper interviews.

## **5. Analysis of the Results**

### **5.1. Profile of Participants**

The participants of the research were all born in the 1990s (figure 13) and participated in the Kennedy-Lugar YES program in USA between the years 2008 and 2015 (figure 14). 11 of the participants were male and six were female (figure 15). The participants came from diverse backgrounds and only few of them had been born in Nairobi even though currently most of them lived in Nairobi or its surroundings. It should be noted that not only their backgrounds were geographically diverse but they came for example from different religions, ethnic groups and some lived with a disability. In this aspect the group represented the goals of the YES program, which include selecting students from various backgrounds (ECA 2016). All the participants spoke English and Swahili, but many spoke a third language as their mother tongue. It is notable that all the participants had either graduated from tertiary education or were currently completing their studies. Many also completed their studies in the best universities of Kenya or had been accepted to universities abroad. It should however be remembered that academic competence was already the selection criteria for the students when accepted to the exchange program.

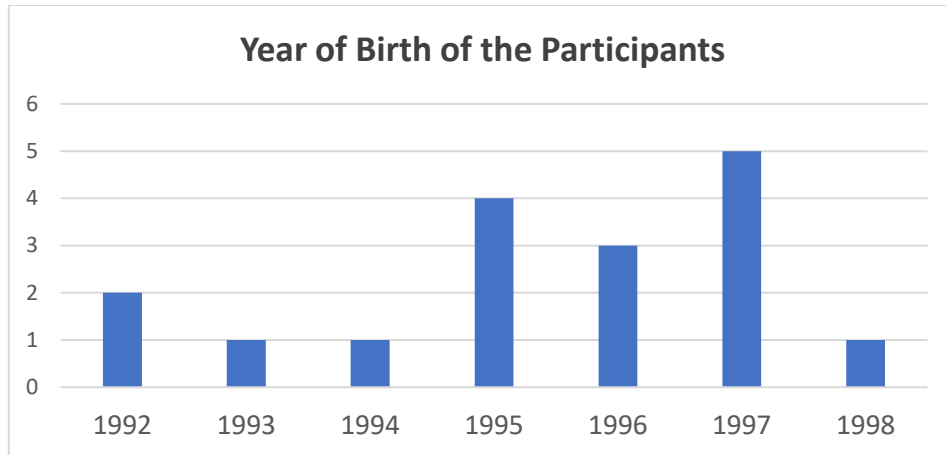


Figure 13. Year of birth of the YES alumni who participated in the research.

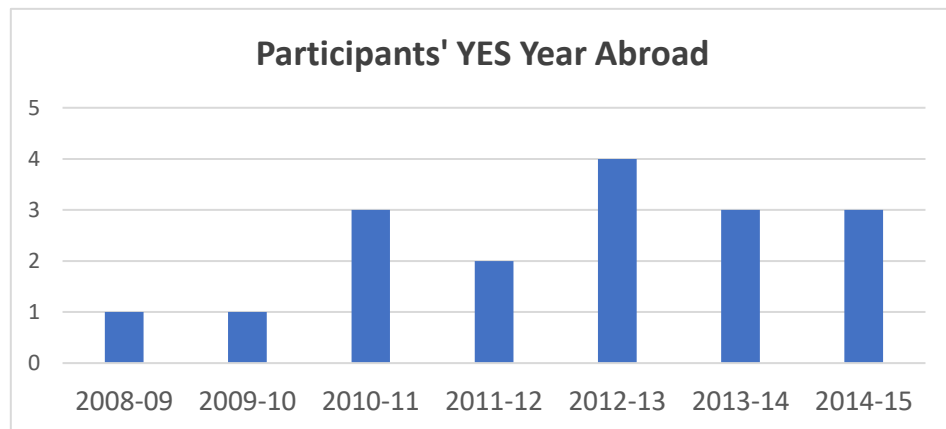


Figure 14. Year of the foreign exchange of the YES alumni who participated in the research.

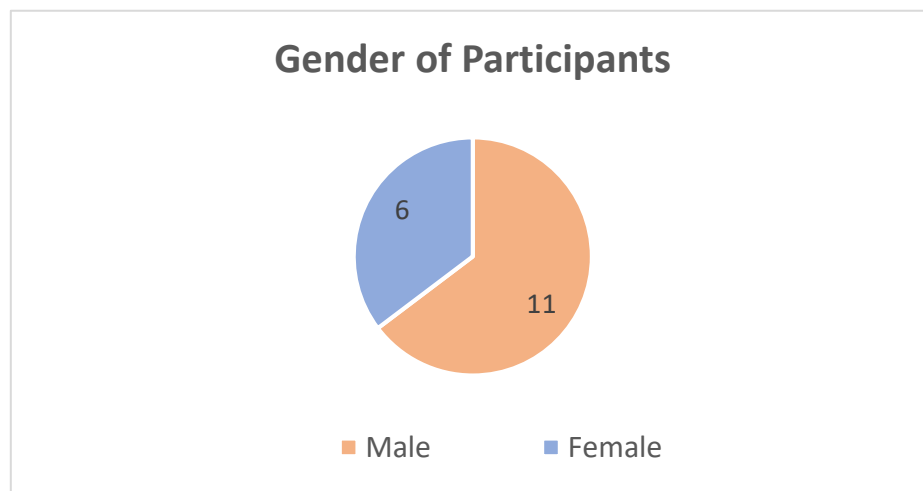


Figure 15. Gender of the YES alumni who participated in the research.

The participants had various other activities besides completing their studies. All of them volunteered, and about half of the participants were currently working. In addition, they mentioned several hobbies. The most mentioned channels for volunteering were AFS and YES, whose activities commonly included visiting children's homes and doing street cleanups. Some participants were involved in planning the activities as others took part implementing them. All participants described themselves as AFS and/or YES alumni. About half of the participants mentioned having applied and received a grant through the YES alumni program for a project they had planned, such as installing running water in their village. In addition, many were involved in other non-governmental organizations that work in fields such as environment, women or youth empowerment, or mentoring children through sports. Those of the participants who were currently working, were involved in different fields reaching from education sector to banking, construction and entrepreneurship. All in all, everyone seemed to be involved in multiple activities in their daily lives. My observations during the volunteering event at the children's home strengthened this image of the participants, as they shared a lot of experiences about their various activities with each other.

All the participants lived in their current location either because of their studies in tertiary education or their work. Some had chosen the university or college based on the location in Nairobi either because it was a new place for them or because the people they wanted to interact with were also in the city. The same reasons were closely related to the plans of participants when discussing the places of the future as well. Almost all the participants had plans to either live or travel abroad again at least at some point during their lives. However, at the same time many of them believed they would come back to Kenya at some point, as they considered building the country and giving back to the society important. The most commonly mentioned destination was the United States, as around half of the participants were planning to either further their studies there at least as one option among others or aiming to visit their host families again. Some had already applied to universities in the United States, out of which a few participants had been accepted and others not. Other mentions for possible places to study were Canada, Australia and some European countries. Other motives to go abroad besides studies was to see host family or close friends after a long time or experience a completely new place.



*“I would love to be here in Kenya but also travel a lot. As in it’s my home, my home is Kenya. But I don’t mind living in another country for a short while and then come back, just like the exchange program.” - YES alumni #10*

Otherwise the responses related to future varied a lot. Some participants wanted to settle in Nairobi, others preferred a smaller place. For some participants the place did not matter, a stronger wish was to for example start their own family. When asking about dreams and fears, were many dreams related to the participants’ current activities or should result after completing the current activities. Figure 16 shows the dreams of the participants that were mentioned during the interviews. Fears were also closely related to the dreams, as most participants were afraid of not reaching their potential and failing while trying to achieve their dreams.

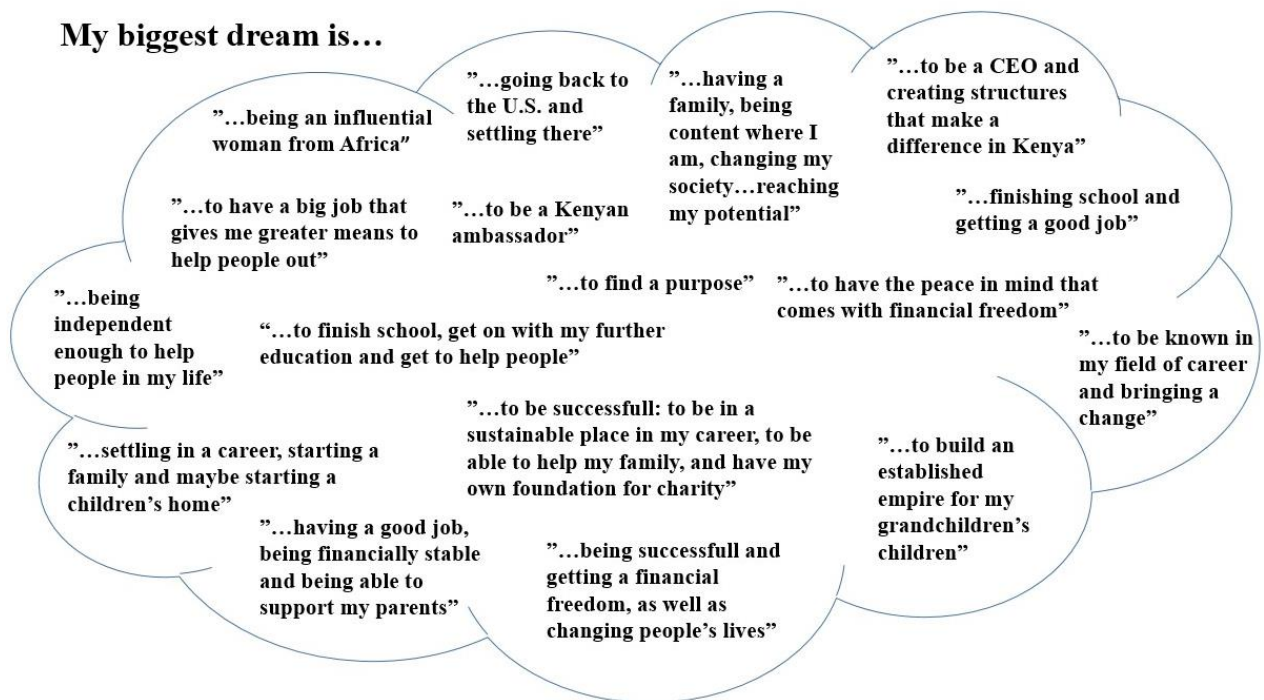


Figure 16. The most important dreams of the YES alumni who participated in the research.

The control group participants were also from Nairobi and its surroundings. There was one female and two male participants. All of them had been students in tertiary education, but two of them had not finished their studies and had gotten involved in other career-related activities. All of them were also in Nairobi because of the education possibilities or other opportunities that according to them could not be found elsewhere in Kenya or even in East Africa. All three had plans to go

abroad at a certain point of their lives, and had been looking for scholarship possibilities in other countries, mainly in Canada, United Kingdom and Australia. Besides education or career, they were also involved in other activities such as hobbies or some volunteering.

Why are the participants involved in these kinds of activities then? Why do they have these kinds of dreams and plans for their future? What kind of worldviews and identities emerge from the data? A qualitative data analysis of the results will be presented in the following chapters, supported with the experiences of observation and the group workshop.

## **5.2. Meanings of Places**

The participants provided data about their own geographical imagination during the empirical part of the research. They constructed their narration around certain places that related to their lives. The alumni provided perspectives on people, atmosphere, education, governance and many other themes that link to certain places. The perspectives also tell something about the participants' values. In the next paragraphs I will provide results about the images that the alumni provided about different places.

### **5.2.1. Kenya**

Regarding places that emerged during the interviews, the participants were most eager to mention things related to Kenya. This strengthens my vision that Kenya seems an important place to all the participants and that they want to contribute on the path of the country in the future. Of course the participants have lived in Kenya for most of their lives and therefore it may come naturally that they share examples of the country while explaining about their activities and other things in the interview.

The most commented issue was education. Most of the remarks touched the quality of education and had a negative tone. According to the participants, the education they had received in Kenya was too theoretical. There was not enough practical education, one reason explained to be that there was not enough equipment for that. Many also felt that the Kenyan curriculum was too difficult, competitive, tiring and stressful, as well as based on memorizing. They also pointed out that graduating would not guarantee getting a job as the curriculum did not teach the necessary life skills.

*“What I don’t like about the Kenyan system is that it’s just going to learn basics, they are going to learn theories, you know, it’s just formal learning. There isn’t anything outside of that. [...] And then in Kenya you’re either stupid or you’re a sharp student. I don’t like that. It’s like trying to let a fish climb a tree. I mean definitely a fish cannot climb a tree. I feel like people are different, people should be given different opportunities.” -YES alumni #8, female*

Strikes were mentioned by many, both related to education as well as society more broadly. Mostly strikes were seen as a slowing factor, something that delayed studies and graduation.

*“We just wait for the strike to be over and then wait for the next one to come so yea it’s sort of that cycle.” -YES alumni #5, male*

A few participants underlined that Kenyan education was “copy-pasted” from the British curriculum. Some participants also compared the Kenyan education to the education they had received in the United States where according to them differences between students were better taken into account and people’s talent was embraced. They also mentioned that teachers appeared to be more caring in the United States. A few participants nevertheless pointed out that education in Kenya was still an important factor that had contributed to the lives of many and lifted people from poverty.

Employment was another issue that the participants considered quite difficult in Kenya. They named different reasons for that. Some thought there were too many workers educated for the same career, some hinted that it is the expatriates that end up getting the jobs. According to some participants, requirements of work experience were placed too high, or it was impossible to get a job without having connections to the right people. A few participants also suggested what could be done: more community service and internships during higher education would provide work experience and investing to fields like sports and art would give more people diverse opportunities. One participant pointed out that Kenya had started embracing talent lately, which they saw as positive development.

The government of Kenya was also a common subject during the interviews, especially when citizenship was discussed. The general image was that people had lost faith in the government, the

leaders were unqualified and did not take other opinions into consideration, and that people chose their leaders based on wrong criteria. Government was also seen as the main reason for the university strikes. Some participants believed there was nothing to do about the situation, and one of them mentioned that the possibility of political assassinations frightened them. Others noted that they would rather try to fix things through volunteering than wait for the government to fill its duties. However, one participant mentioned that they were satisfied that the country now has a new constitution.

*“Something that disappoints me is, a lot of people have...they have lost faith in the government, and people don’t really understand or know what to do with that. And so, it’s one of the disappointments but it’s also one of the things that I personally am working to inform.”* -YES alumni #12, female

Over half of the participants also talked about corruption in relation to Kenya. They considered it being something that does a lot of harm to the county, such as decreases the sense of patriotism and slows down development. However, some participants noted that Kenyans were becoming less tolerant when it comes to corruption and some participants named concrete steps that they had personally decided to take in terms of fighting the corruption, such as not taking or paying bribes.

In relation to employment, corruption and governance, around one third of the participants mentioned tribalism in Kenya. Most of them wished that all people would be treated the same way regardless their tribe. Some however pointed out that it was also a richness to have so many different languages and cultures. One participant mentioned that maybe it was also easier to fit in even if coming from a minority, as Kenya was such a diverse county.

During the interviews, the participants also provided an image about the people in Kenya in general. According to them, the unity of Kenyans was something valuable. Some believed that Kenyans were growing more united every day, while others blamed the government for making citizens less and less patriotic. Few participants mentioned it was the catastrophes that made people become more united or on the other hand common memes and jokes. Some participants underlined that the potential of the youth should be utilized better. In addition, brain drain was mentioned as a threat to the country.

*“I like how people are....sometimes they get really united in like doing something that’s theirs, like something that’s Kenyan. There was a time that there was a drought I think in Turkana [...] They raised almost, I think around 500 million or something, so that was really nice of them, like they get united most times. The unity is really nice.” -YES alumni #7, male*

Overall, the participants seemed to appreciate especially the hospitality of the Kenyan people as well as the physical landscape of the country. They were more critical towards education, employment and the government. They seemed to have a clear image about what there was to be assessed. In a broader context, Kenya was described a third-world country that depends on foreign aid and should catch up regarding development. Some participants made an indication towards the history of colonization and how the systems were adopted from the British. Even though some participants considered making change being difficult, others believed that Kenya had potential. One participant underlined that there were for example Kenyan businesses and companies leading the way.

*“Like let’s say a third world country, a developing nation like Kenya, and also seeing many developing nations in Africa, I’m inclined to working towards assisting governments make sustainable economies. So as to ensure the lives of their citizens are made better through economics and through good economic policies.”-YES alumni #7, male*

The interviews conducted with the control group participants did not majorly differ from the interviews of the YES alumni when it comes to perspectives about Kenya. Strikes, the quality of education and governance, corruption, as well as tribalism were common themes in the interviews, as well as respecting the diversity and openness of people.

### **5.2.2. United States of America**

The second most mentions, even though just a third compared to the number of quotations about Kenya, considered the United States. The people in the United States as well as education were the most described themes. In general, the participants did a lot of comparison between Kenya and the United States. Americans were described as warm and nice people, who were mostly accommodative of differences. This had surprised some of the participants and caused a change in

their perspective. Some participants however mentioned that people seemed also quite ignorant, which had disappointed them.

The education system in the United States was appreciated a lot, and the participants described it as easy and more practical than in Kenya. Teachers were described as caring. Racism was only discussed in relation to the United States. The participants who mentioned it, seemed to have an image that racism occurred in the United States but many of them added that personally they had not experienced it. In addition, the United States was described as a diverse first-world country and a supreme power with a lot of opportunities. It was nevertheless acknowledged by many of the participants that the country had its problems to tackle. About one third of the participants mentioned that they had applied to the exchange program based on the image that they had had about the United States when applying. They had wanted to experience going exactly there and not anywhere else, even if there would have been other options. Others however told they could have selected another destination if there were any.

*“...for anyone who hasn't been to the U.S. it is like the first priority, you know.”* -YES alumni #16, male

Those of the control group who mentioned the United States mainly saw it as a place that had more opportunities than Kenya. However, the one who had earlier dreamt of getting a scholarship there had given up the plan as according to them the crime rate and amount of racism had recently increased.

### **5.2.3. Other Places**

The data also revealed perspectives about other places such as home, Nairobi, Europe, Africa and the world. These were however places that had clearly less quotations than Kenya and the United States. In general, Africa was mostly associated with Kenya in a way that when the participant was discussing issues or cultures in Kenya, they sometimes brought up that the situation is similar in the whole continent. Europe or a single country in Europe were mostly mentioned when it came to education possibilities. Home was defined differently depending on each participant – for some it defined a physical location and for others it was the place where their family was currently living.

*“Because Africans I think, we just have the same issues. The issue in Kenya about corruption, you’ll find if it in a different place, yea.” -YES alumni #6, female*

*“...it’s mostly made up of the people you are with, rather than the place. So home is where people make you feel like you belong there.” -YES alumni #15, male*

What comes to the world in general, many participants emphasized the perspective of all people living in one world. They also identified problems that go beyond the borders of nations and brought up the possibility of solving the problems together. Lastly, the participants represented Nairobi as a busy city with a fast life, diverse people, a lot of opportunities and too much traffic.

*“Social injustices, we have social injustices everywhere in the world. So really, it is not a Kenyan issue. It’s a world issue. So clearly, yea. I think at some point we should actually even stop thinking of ourselves as Kenyans. And start...or Americans. And start thinking of ourselves as humans.” -YES alumni #12, female*

*“Well, most of the times we think that in the big cities that’s where there are very many opportunities. So yea maybe that’s why I decided to...Yea I think like there are a lot of opportunities that are there in the city like that you can’t get like in the like outskirts universities, because here it’s like very easy to get like notices on jobs and on volunteer activities that are happening.” -YES alumni #5, male*

The control group participants similarly extended Kenyan issues as African issues and saw the world as an increasingly connected place where similar problems touch people everywhere. Especially the English speaking countries of the Global North were seen as places with a lot of opportunities.

### **5.3. Meanings of Citizenship**

Most of the participants defined citizenship as having a sense of belonging to a particular country and being patriotic to that country. In addition to that, the actions related to citizenship were mostly about carrying civic responsibility, such as obeying the law, voting and paying taxes. Everyone considered being a good citizen important, even though some admitted that they do not think about citizenship very often. On the other hand, there were over half of the participants who

underlined that taking action is a very important part of citizenship, such as volunteering and giving back to the society, being involved in all the issues, building the nation and investing in the country. One participant reminded that citizenship is just a legal concept, and the culture where one has grown up affects more regarding the person's identity and sense of belonging. However, some participants pointed out that citizenship, too, plays a role in identity, as it is where one has been identified.

Among the responses there were also quotations that did not specify the feeling of belonging towards a particular country but insisted that citizenship could mean having a sense of belonging to a community, a place or anywhere one could call home. There were also three participants who said that the legal definition of citizenship restricted their life or that they felt that citizenship to them is more about the whole world.

*“There's like so many things about citizenship and what a good citizen has to be but I don't know, I never really paid attention to that.”* -YES alumni #13, male

*“So I think it gives a sense of ownership, so that's actually a good thing. So I think that would be the best thing about citizenship. The idea of citizenship, it brings the ownership, being part of somewhere, you know somewhere you can call home.”* -YES alumni #8, female

From there, the discussion moved to global citizenship, in case the participant had not already mentioned it without asking. There were two YES alumni participants that had not heard about global citizenship before. Almost everyone else told they had heard about it during their exchange experience. There were however various different definitions to it. Only one participant was slightly sceptic with the concept and questioned the idea of everyone becoming global citizens. Their definition was more tied to understanding specific cultures and thinking it would be impossible to understand all cultures during one person's lifetime.

Most of the participants defined global citizenship from the individual's point of view through feelings, social relations and possible actions. Only few participants commented the global political structures. For many participants global citizenship meant interaction with people from all over the world. Some of them also continued by mentioning that trying to learn from others and helping



whichever society regardless their background were also included in the definition. Other actions that were mentioned included being concerned about what happens in the world, engaging in the international systems, and being part of other movements that address the global issues such as the global warming.

Acceptance was the key word for around half of the participants. For them, accepting everyone despite their possible differences was the most important sign of being a global citizen. Over half of the participants also agreed that global citizenship includes the feeling of being part of something bigger than for example your own society, place or country.

*“For me, that’s what I think global citizenship is, like being part of something greater than just being like from one place. -YES alumni #13, male*

Most of the participants also believed that global citizenship solves problems and is a way to peace. Some even underlined that it may be the only way to solve conflicts in the future as it leads people to feel like they are part of a one big family. When asked how to promote it, the solutions offered were mostly related to the exchange programs, such as establishing more of them and in various levels of education. There was one participant who brought tribalism to the discussion and pointed out that before most Kenyans can feel like global citizens, they first need to take the step of feeling part of Kenya instead of their own tribe.

*“...so many difficulties we have today, you know there is so much hatred and so much. Wars and conflicts between different nations. I think global citizenship will solve maybe so much if not all of that.” -YES alumni #2, male*

Six participants indicated towards the legal structures of nation-states, dreaming about the possibility to go to any country at any time they wanted or pointing out that Kenya supports dual citizenship due to the new constitution, which for them was a positive thing.

All of the control group participants also defined citizenship as belonging to a country and being patriotic or having a right to speak freely. One of them pointed out that there must be differences in citizenships between different countries but they could be better acknowledged only by going somewhere else for a while. Global citizenship was a previously unknown concept to all the control group participants. They provided diverse answers when discussing what it could mean and what

would be the consequences of it. One of the participants underlined the possibilities it could provide, one was skeptical of losing the cultures under a single global culture, and one participant saw that there were both positive and negative sides to it, requiring finding a balance.

Citizenship and global citizenship were also discussed in focus groups during the workshop. The workshop deepened the responses given during the interviews and strengthened the image I had obtained while transcribing. The focus group participants noted that as everyone automatically has to belong to a country, most people tend to identify with it as well. They also pointed out that nationality contributes to the definition of culture due to similar laws and ethics that govern people in that country. According to them for example the language of “Sheng”, a mixture of English and Swahili, is unique to Kenyans.

Regarding global citizenship, the focus group participants agreed that the concepts of international and global have different meanings. According to them “international” should be used when for example speaking about relations between different countries and “global” was a broader concept. There was a long discussion about whether global citizenship should be extended to a legal status or limited to social influence. The participants did not completely agree with each other. The final outcome was that the current borders of nation-states and systems of governance are in some ways effective but in some aspects place too much power on certain groups. However, many of the participants thought that some sort of global structures or global governance would not be any better. It was also noted that global citizenship was not only a concept limited to human issues, but should for example regard animal rights as well.

#### **5.4. Sense of Belonging**

Belonging was broadly defined during the interviews, as I thought it would be more valuable to know how the participants themselves define belonging, rather than for example forcing to pinpoint an exact place with a physical location in case location did not matter that much to them. However, more specific questions related to belonging were asked additionally. These questions related to place, citizenship and other groups such as communities or societies.

To begin with, all participants told that they belonged to or felt part of Kenya. Nevertheless, they simultaneously felt part of other societies or communities, such as their own

tribe. Interestingly everyone except one participant told that they felt like global citizens. A few participants also struggled naming any location where they would feel that they belong, and it seemed like having a comfortable feeling or people with similar values around them was the most important thing, location being not so important. Some also pointed out that the feeling of belonging was constantly shifting, depending on the groups one associated with, as well as location.

*“I don’t feel like I’m part of just one society or community, because as it is, I feel like I’m part of so many communities in so very different ways and...based on my interactions and you know my hopeful future interactions.”* -YES alumni #3, male

*“For me identity is shifty, it’s material. I sort of don’t belong anywhere and belong everywhere in the sense that for example at this point I belong in Nairobi and I will engage myself in Nairobi activities and show concern towards things happening around Nairobi. When I move to somewhere else...I’m gonna have to drop my identity as a Nairobiian and embrace another. So, the fact that you have to adopt, then drop, then adopt and then drop, means that I shouldn’t have a fixed identity, you see?”* -YES alumni #15, male

*“So I think I don’t know because I...yea, I’ve been born here, I was raised here, but I feel like as a...as humans, there is much more to that you know.”* -YES alumni #2, male

The participants also named reasons for the feeling of belonging. What comes to feeling part of Kenya, three main reasons emerged from the data. First reason was simply the fact that the participants had been born and raised in Kenya and because of that had family, friends and other nice people around them over there. Secondly, they told that despite the many problems Kenya was facing, the participants were trying to improve issues, which had partly created the feeling of belonging. Thirdly, they told that they had concluded that the unity of the country is important, even though there were many different ethnic groups in Kenya. Some had realized this after ethnic clashes during elections in Kenya and some had experienced the patriotism of many people in the United States and were wondering what would happen if Kenyans were as patriotic. However, many participants also underlined the necessity of having a feeling of belonging to tribes, as they provided the platform for the culture and language one had identified with since childhood. One participant mentioned that when coming from a minority, blending in to a smaller town had been

more difficult but now life in the capital was more diverse which decreased the amount of problems.

*“I love my country. Right now it’s a bit hard to...But it will always be home, so running away is not like an ideal option, but I’m trying to better things. I’m very much Kenyan.”*

-YES alumni #4, female

*“I came to realize, after actually the 2007 elections, I don’t know if you heard anything about that, yea, I actually came to learn that it’s not about your community, it’s about you as a Kenyan. You know, you don’t have to identify yourself as a group, but as a Kenyan.”*

-YES alumni #11, female

*“Which is really part of my culture, when I go home and when my relatives talk to me with my own language, you get to speak in your own language that is different from the rest of the people. It actually gives you a sense of belonging, that you belong somewhere, you have roots somewhere.”* -YES alumni #10, male

*“I think I belong in Kenya. Not permanently though.”* -YES alumni #17, male

The reasons for feeling like a global citizen varied. Most of the participants told they felt like it because they had been traveling to different countries, had friends from abroad or in general had been somehow involved in the international arena. Many of them mentioned especially the exchange program, as after that they had begun identifying as global citizens. Other reasons that had made the feeling emerge were being involved in community service that benefited the whole world, having a feeling that your voice was being heard, being able to adjust to any place and realizing that own ideologies and worries were directed towards the world in general.

The participant who did not identify as a global citizen had also ambitions to belong to the global society in the future, but their definition of global citizenship varied from the other definitions, which was most likely the reason for not feeling like one. According to them, it would be impossible to learn enough about other regions of the world to be able to identify with all of them. For other participants global citizenship could be reached already by interacting with someone from somewhere else.

*“I feel part of a global citizenship. I mean, like I said, I’ve been privileged to travel around the world, and being in the international arena, I’m interested in everything that happens everywhere.”* –YES alumni #12, female

*“With time, being a global citizen is going to be one of those necessities in life.”* -YES alumni #15, male

*“I think I’m a global citizen, I think, the world and how large it is, I think also because of my ideologies, I’m not like narrowed towards like one country, I think like my ideologies are towards the whole world at large. Like ensuring more economies are made better, like developing countries, ensuring that the whole world is like living peacefully, yea.”* -YES alumni #7, male

*“I can’t refer myself to just being a Kenyan, I’m a global citizen. It’s just that lawfully I am Kenyan.”* -YES alumni #12, female

Besides Kenya and the world, the responses of the participants varied a lot what comes to belonging somewhere. The answers included being part of the school alumni, youth, religious communities, American society, career societies, as well as volunteering societies. Some felt that they belonged everywhere, and others felt a sense of belonging in all places where having a comfortable feeling. In general, people were many times the reason that created the feeling of belonging towards a certain place or group. Friends, family, host family in the United States as well as a group of volunteers or a religious community were the ones mentioned creating a comfortable, accepted and loved feeling and through that the feeling of belonging.

*“So when they take part in activities, they call upon me, or and I also take part with them, so yea I think, them being available when I need them or I’m maybe available when they need me, yea, which is one of the reasons why I’m like part of them and I enjoy being part of them.”* -YES alumni #7, male

The control group also identified as Kenyans. A difference was that most of them did not feel like global citizens. One participant however pointed out that through social media they had feelings of belonging towards the whole world, but not in other terms, as they had never been outside of Kenya. When asked generally about sense of belonging, the same participant said that they felt like an

earthling, and explained the feeling coming possibly from their soul or maybe God, and that the feeling had always been there. The other control group participants responded that they belonged in Kenya mostly because the culture inside the country is quite similar everywhere.

The participants further discussed the question of belonging in the focus groups. They concluded that as humans were social beings, there was a need to feel accepted by others. Acceptance, love, respect, recognition and understanding were named as factors that could lead to having a sense of belonging. The participants also considered that it was better to feel part of multiple places or groups than only one, and relating to other people was more important than necessarily having a sense of belonging towards a specific physical location.

## **5.5. Values**

Values were a separate dimension during the coding process, and thus could overlap with all the quotations in the other categories. In this dimension, I coded the transcribed text by looking at it from a different angle, asking the question “what kind of values and attitudes are hidden behind the expressions of the participants?” It was the most difficult category in the sense that it required more interpretation, and thus I had to be careful not to over interpret or understand the meaning differently than the participant had meant in the first place.

When observing the code families under the main category of values, two of them emerged as clearly bigger than the others. I had named the code family having the most quotations “learning and experiencing” and the code family with second most quotations “benevolence”. Other code families that had a good amount of quotations regarding values were “personal qualities”, “interpersonal qualities”, “values related to political sphere” and “people”. Also other values emerged that were more difficult to categorize.

### **5.5.1. Learning and Experiencing**

Taking the subcategory “learning and experiencing” to a closer observation revealed what kind of learning and which kind of experiences the participants held valuable. In general, the responses were diverse and all kinds of learning seemed to be appreciated, reaching from formal learning to learning from others, learning about self and learning through new places and experiences. What

was also highly valued was having a meaning or a purpose in everything that the participant was doing.

Valuing formal education became clear in over half of the participants' interviews. Most of them seemed to value it because it was believed to be empowering, lifting from poverty and a key to success. Many of the participants also specified that also the quality of education mattered. Good qualities according to them were learning to think critically, teachers being present in class, learning skills that were necessary in life, as well as not having strikes. Getting a degree from tertiary education and continuing to master or doctorate levels were also held valuable, and were mentioned by around half of the participants. The education that the participants had received in the United States was also held valuable as well as learning civic skills through education. One participant mentioned that global citizenship should be implemented better to the Kenyan school curriculum.

*"I do consider my degree important, I feel like my university degree is one of the most important things that a person can have."* -YES alumni #4, female

*"I think what dissatisfies me is whereby we have a lot of scholars doing a lot of studies and yet after it all, they come out empty-handed."* -YES alumni #1, male

In relation to education, the appreciation of good universities was also visible in the data, as around half of the participants had chosen their tertiary education based on the quality of the institution. Some had aimed for the best universities in Kenya, while others had plans to go to the best universities abroad.

*"But it was the first choice because it's the best university in Kenya. Yea, it has a reputation, which would really help you get ahead once you go to an employer. It's the most trusted university in Kenya. I mean, why not conquer the best."* -YES alumni #15, male

Most of the participants were also highly motivated in their activities and seemed to value that motivation. To them it was important to be interested in the activity for the sake of the activity itself. Many said they loved what they were doing and had a lot of fun around their activities. Others on the other hand told that they were still looking for their passion. There were

also participants that seemed concerned whether also other people would be finding a purpose in life. According to them, the society should value more people's different talents.

In addition, being open to new things was valued throughout the data, such as looking for new experiences, getting new opportunities, traveling, seeing the world from a different perspective, and gaining new skills. These seemed to be among the main reasons for doing things in life, and the participants seemed to agree it was not possible to learn everything through formal education, even though it was also highly valued.

*“And for me as a change-agent, as a social change agent, that is something that you cannot learn in books, you cannot learn in schools, you have to experience it.” -YES alumni #12, female*

*“The main thing is like I just want to explore, like I want to go places.” -YES alumni #9, male*

*“I think education helps, I think, the lucky. But skills will definitely, talent, skills will definitely go like a long way. They can help you like get through certain places you thought you never would. So I feel it [education] is [important], at some level, but if you have skills, if you have talent, then I think you should use it more, yea. Because it can...education, you can finish school and go to office, they'll reject your papers and what I think, talent and skills is really important.” -YES alumni #6, female*

### **5.5.2. Benevolence**

The second big theme to emerge in the subcategory of values can be called benevolence, as it included appreciating volunteering, charity, helping, giving back, making an impact, and many other quotations with similar vocabulary. Appreciating altruistic activities in general seemed to be one of the core values for almost all participants, serving as a motive for their actions. Many said they would always help wherever they could, and many also had plans to have their own charity-related foundation in the future. On the other hand, many of the participants did not name exact destinations or locations for their intentions, so it is possible that their volunteering was not as organized as for the ones who named exact places where they had been volunteering and still volunteered.



*“I’d stop everything else that I’m doing to volunteer.”* -YES alumni #3, male

Most quotations were especially about appreciating activities that help people and humanity in some way. Helping people in general was valued without any specifications, but if I asked more specifically if the participants held a certain group or place important, the responses included giving back to own society or community, helping children or youth, women, the less fortunate, orphans, own family or rural communities. About half of the participants also mentioned separately the importance of helping and giving back to the nation, Kenya. They also linked valuing helping others in the country as part of citizenship. However, about half of the participants did not want to specify any group or place and seemed to take humanity as an intrinsic value, worth helping and volunteering towards everybody no matter what.

*“...it’s just because we have to do that, it’s our responsibility to help humanity.”* -YES alumni #1, male

It was also interesting to analyze what kind of channels the participants appreciated and saw as natural when wanting to volunteer, take action and influence others. Being an example and influencing others through own actions was held important. Also, for many it was their career through which influencing was valued, as well as volunteering via AFS, another organization or in general, creating an own project or foundation or applying to be a representative for example in the university. Only two participants said they did not believe something could be done, and this concerned the case of being able to influence the decisions of the government. Overall, making a change was valued throughout the interviews and directed towards either a specific group or the whole world.

### **5.5.3. Personal and Interpersonal Qualities**

Certain personal and interpersonal qualities emerged from the data as well, indicating what kind of features the participants appreciated in other people and themselves. Regarding themselves, the codes about the qualities can be divided into two smaller groups: being content and reaching towards success. What comes to being content, three quarters of the participants underlined the importance of either having or finding a place where one can feel comfortable, feeling comfortable in their own body and not having too much of a workload or too many plans so that life would not be too stressful.

On the other hand, what was even more visible in the data was the participants' high ambitions to reach their own potential. Being in control of one's own life was valued, as well as being independent for example financially and taking responsibility in daily chores like washing own laundry. Being ambitious, successful and reaching own potential emerged especially from the responses that related to the participants' fears. Getting into representative positions, doing well in school and achieving things at a young age were valued, and simultaneously almost all the participants were afraid that they would not reach what they wanted to achieve.

*"When I was coming to campus, like most of the things I was so independent. I'd pay for my things, I wouldn't ask my parents for money, I still don't ask them for money." -YES alumni #7, male*

*"Biggest fear, generally just not meeting my potential. At the end of the day I should be like, you know, I'm very happy with what I have achieved. You know for me like the one thing I fear most is like in the end of it all being like, you know I could have...maybe I could have done better. That's like the biggest fear for me." -YES alumni #2, male*

What comes to interpersonal values, there is one code that emerged as being a code with most quotations out of all codes under the theme of values. All but two participants mentioned interacting with other people and seemed to value it in a way or another during the interviews. The reasons behind valuing interaction with other people were mostly related to learning and interculturality but also career-related networking emerged. Interacting with someone new was appreciated in general, was it someone from a different culture and gaining a better understanding of the world through them, someone who could help proceeding in a career, or sometimes just for the excitement of meeting someone new in general and getting new friends. Communication was valued as a good way of solving many problems, such as decreasing polarization and changing negative perceptions. In addition, other people's recognition was held valuable by most of the participants. Especially the participants seemed to value the gesture that if they had done something, other people would show their appreciation towards that action.

*"I think many problems in the world today, it's because of I'd say misunderstanding or misinformation. One thing to solve that is, you know, get to know like your neighbor and, you know, other people from other societies." -YES alumni #2, male*

*“I felt like, you know, especially in this career I need to come to Nairobi, meet, this is where I meet all the...who is in this industry are, you know it’s easy to run into such people and you know network in Nairobi more than in Mombasa.” -YES alumni #3, male*

#### **5.5.4. Values Related to Political Sphere**

Along the interviews, the participants also expressed attitudes related to citizenship and the political situation of Kenya. Those opinions revealed what kind of values were held important when it comes to the political sphere. Good leadership and effective governance were some of the major things the participants longed for. In addition, unity of the country as well as patriotism emerged as valuable things in about half of the participants’ interviews. These expressions were related to tribalism, which was among the things that was not valued among the participants, as according to them it played a role in politics. Corruption was another thing not valued for very similar reasons.

*“A lot of negative things happening in this country [...] Like things that have to do like with our leaders, and the corruption, the corruption is crazy, crazy, you know. So they can really mess up our sense of patriotism.” -YES alumni #14, female*

On the other hand, many participants appreciated respecting the leaders, government and laws. One participant mentioned the new constitution as an example of something that should be valued. Another participant however mentioned that sometimes respecting the decisions of the government is difficult, as the leaders do not equally consider everyone’s opinions.

#### **5.5.5. People**

What was visible in all the interviews, was appreciation of people in a way or another. People seemed to be the reason why the participants wanted to go to places, if they for example missed their host family and friends in the United States or liked volunteering because the other volunteers were such good company. Places were often held important because of the people who had been in that place. For example teachers were mentioned being influential in schools. The participants also appreciated people for the sake of giving opportunities to the participants themselves, such as parents allowing to participate in the exchange program and raising their kids in a proper way. This resulted the participants also wanting to do something good to other people.

*“I’d say my teachers. They are really, you know, understanding. They believed in me. Yea, and they just kept encouraging me to go on and yea, just work hard and be the best version of me, yea.” -YES alumni #11, female*

*“I have amazing parents and they’ve really sacrificed and do a lot in terms of like above and beyond to make us comfortable. And yea, you know, they are approaching old age and I want them to like relax.” -YES alumni #14, female*

#### **5.5.6. Other Emerging Values**

There were other values that emerged in the data but were difficult to categorize under a specific theme. One of the codes having the biggest number of quotations was “equality and justice”. The participants seemed to value it in multiple aspects but overall the emerging attitudes related to equality between all humans. Some participants addressed racial and tribal inequalities, others brought up people with disabilities. Many also talked about the importance of listening to everyone equally when making political decisions. Another issue that emerged and was held valuable was gender equality. Some participants talked about feminism as others mentioned for example the differences in schooling between boys and girls.

*“And gender equality because especially in Africa, there is totally zero equality, the boy child is more superior to the girl child. And I feel like everyone should be equal. You know if a boy gets two mangoes, a girl gets two mangoes. If a boy goes to school, the girl shouldn’t have to, you know, sacrifice her education and stay home, take care of the home with the mom. I feel like the girl should also go to school. If the boy goes to university, the girl should also go to university, not go get married, you know.” -YES alumni #3, male*

Time was another matter appreciated by more than half of the participants according to the data. Most of the quotations about valuing time were school-related. First of all, losing time because of the university strikes was a concern. Many participants also pointed out that they had been worried about their classmates getting one year ahead of them because of the exchange year. A few had also chosen their university based on where they could start immediately or applied abroad because they thought they would learn faster in a more efficient and advanced institute. Other mentions about time were related to slow immigration processes, valuing punctuality and choosing the place of living in a way that avoiding traffic would be possible.

Another big theme that was clearly valued among most participants was internationality and the global scale. First, the exchange program was seen as the best possibility to make the world a better place. Other emerging values were being part of humanity, aiming for global cooperation and partnership, as well as thinking globally.

Few other matters that the participants held valuable according to the data, were diversity, fostering peace, respecting God, being financially stable, having a feeling of belonging towards something, and having people with similar thoughts around them.

*“So it’s not that I just wanna pursue money but yea, at the end of the day, even forever, I want financial freedom, I want to have the peace in mind that comes with that.”* -YES alumni #14, female

*“...as much as there is individualism, there has to be that sense of community. There has to be that sense of humanity that at the end of the day we’re living the same frickin’ life, we’re all gonna go to the some frickin’ ground, we gotta do something for each other.”*-YES alumni #4, female

As the control group had very few participants and their interview data was not transcribed, it is more difficult to report any results about the values dimension. However, everyone in the control group discussed about the importance of learning and experiencing new things, appreciating quality institutions of tertiary education and good governance, making an impact and appreciating opportunities that other countries than Kenya could offer to them.

## **5.6. Changing Worldviews and Shifting Identities**

This dimension was designed to reveal how possible changes, shifts and learning regarding the themes of the interviews were explained by the participants. What did they personally think had affected their choices and thinking? Multiple different factors were brought to discussion, reaching from places to certain people and periods of life in general. However, the most notable factor that everyone mentioned at least once and some even five to eight times during the interview was the exchange year in the United States. It had shaped the direction of the life of the participants, influencing either in a specific way or more holistically.

*“Anyhow my life literally is surrounded, like it moves around my exchange experience”*  
-YES alumni #4, female

Two biggest changes that the exchange year caused according to the participants were related to volunteering and the choice of tertiary education and career. The “spirit” of volunteering was found or at least grew during the exchange experience, one of the major reasons being the requirement of volunteering a certain number of hours during the exchange year. Many participants described becoming less selfish and growing a consciousness towards other people, as well as beginning to want to interact more with people coming from different backgrounds. It was also mentioned that for the first time someone provided a platform through which volunteering could be done, so it was easier to start doing it. Also the experience that the participants got treated so well by their host families and friends made them want to give back and share that feeling further. A few participants also mentioned that through volunteering they had the possibility to develop infrastructure and the level of modernity in their communities towards what they had seen back in the United States. The same motivation was mentioned as a reason for a changed or strengthened career choice.

*“I think that’s one of the major things we learned in the youth exchange program. I used to never volunteer until I went to States, and all volunteering actually opened my eyes. Going to a children’s home helping someone who you are not expected giving back, you know, that’s a really good thing, you know, that mindset, I think it’s a really good thing. You learn how to give, without expecting something, and I think that’s what charity has, I want to develop myself and at the same time I want to give back.”* –YES alumni #8, female

Secondly, many career choices of the participants were shaped by the experience of living in the United States. Things mentioned were change of values during exchange year leading to another career choice, or wanting a career including more interaction with other people. A few participants were inspired by a course they had taken in high school in the United States and others admired their American friends who were already working at a young age. Some participants had even gotten a sponsor for their studies from the United States, such as a member of the host family or a close friend, or the experience had directly helped them getting a job.

*“This comes back to the fact that I was an exchange student. I learned a lot about cultures and I noticed that I love meeting new people and learning different cultures, so that’s what has drawn me to political science.” – YES alumni #7, male*

Other major aspects that stemmed from the exchange year were understanding towards others, as well as a deeper understanding of self. Many participants told that their perspectives towards other cultures and religions had become more open, and in general knowledge about the world had grown. Their opinions towards other cultures, nationalities and sexualities were less based on stereotypes. The definition of family had broadened for many as well. Personal growth was most visible in becoming more independent for example in handling own studies and finances. Many participants told they had learned new aspects of themselves through conversations with others, such as understanding own values and identity and in which kind of environment those had formed. Experiencing new situations such as trying new sports had also taught participants to trust themselves.

*“Before that [exchange year] it was all about stereotypes. As in would you believe that what many people say. Once you hear that Americans are bad people, you would believe that because you have not yet experienced that, but when you actually go there and live with them for a while, you actually get to realize not all of them are bad. Some of them are really gracious and good people.” -YES alumni #10, male*

*“The year was very important to me. I mean, I was the only black kid hosted in my high school. So that kind of formed...informed the person who I am today because then I got not only understand other people’s culture, I got to understand who I was as a person. And why I had the values I strongly identify with.” -YES alumni #12, female*

The participants also pointed towards the exchange organization and the program itself when trying to grasp the moments of change during their lives. They acknowledged that without the existence of the program they would not have had the opportunity to experience all the things they did in the United States and continue volunteering afterwards. The organization had become part of their lives and many participants had the feeling that even after many years from the exchange the organization still contributed to their lives and through that they still learned new things. Some participants also said exchange was the reason or at least a strengthening factor towards why they

felt like global citizens. In addition to these, there were certain changes mentioned by one or two participants, such as becoming more patriotic, getting new perspectives towards tribalism and changes in own ideology.

*“I would stay in my country, I didn’t know like...you wanna help people but you don’t know how. So the YES program introduced me to community service and how I can do about it.”*  
-YES alumni #5, male

*“I used to go to church, my host mom told me there is a volunteering opportunity you can have and feed the homeless. I was shocked, I didn’t think there would be homeless people in the U.S.”* -YES alumni #6, female

The second factor that had been influencing the course of the participants’ lives was people. Out of all the discussions about people being influential, most quotations had something to do with either both parents, one of the parents or some other family member. The direction of studies and career was seen as the single biggest matter where participants had listened to other people. Especially parents had been encouraging towards a certain field or a school, but also siblings, close acquaintances or people in general were said to have told something relating to studies that the participants could not disregard. Families of the participants were also mentioned having a big influence in raising and supporting their children. The participants mentioned that especially getting a good education, attitude to aim towards success, and importance of religion were things that were already embraced in their childhood. People had also had a supporting role when deciding to apply to the exchange program. A few participants also mentioned that in general when seeing other people achieving something, they would get ideas and wanted to try similar things themselves.

*“...when I look back, I think like growing up I have like my mom, she’s such a badass, she is, you know, she’s someone who, how do I put it, and I didn’t see it when I was younger but now I see that she is really influenced me a lot towards to become like not depend on a man or like go out there and make my own money, like be successful and all that, you know. And she is that kind of person even. So I think of late, and always I have wanted to be ambitious, [...] like na-ah, I don’t wanna be the first lady, I wanna be the president.”*  
-YES alumni #14, female



*“And of course, my family. Without them I’d definitely not be here, because of their sacrifices, their love, their motivation.” -YES alumni #11, female*

Also, when the participants mentioned that a place had been very influential for them, when asked closer what exactly was the reason for that in the specific place, many continued by mentioning the people in that place. Most of the participants told that either their home or the place they had grown up had also been a big influence in shaping their lives. For most of the participants the definition of home was still the place where their family was living or the town where they had been born, even though they were not living there anymore. For many participants it was the culture of the place that had made them become different compared to other people and they said they could realize that when moving to a different place also inside Kenya. Home was appreciated as it provided a place where it was possible to feel comfortable and relaxed.

*“The first one I believe is my home. [...] Like it’s the place where I can share my dreams and nobody will judge me, everyone will encourage me, the place where there is love, love for my home, there is food, you know, it’s a place where I’m nurtured, I have grown, I grow each and every day, I am corrected, so it is actually a place, it has made me who I am today.” -YES alumni #10, male*

Around half of the participants concluded that everything they had experienced so far had shaped them to become the persons that they were today, and it was difficult to separate which experiences had been the most influential. For them it was more the overall experience of life that was underlined.

*“You know, when you’re in high school, you learn these things, like teachers tell you, your pastors tell you at church, so like when you’re growing you have always been told of that so yea it’s like a progress you know.” -YES alumni #9, male*

*“I think everywhere you go, like when you travel or when you live somewhere, it will always leave a mark in you.” -YES alumni #14, female*

Around half of the participants also mentioned that the schools they had been in or the education they had received had in their opinion taught them a lot and were one reason to explain their way of thinking nowadays. Again, for some it was about the whole journey through school experiences

in general, learning on each stage as well as experiencing both day-schools and boarding school, getting friends, becoming more independent and gaining leadership skills through certain positions. For some it was more about a specific school, such as high school or university that contributed to their current direction and worldview.

*“That [my university] is where my career will develop. That is where the rest of my life will develop, that will be the reference point for the rest of my life because right now I’m learning to be independent, being at the university by myself at the hostel and like that, being in good management of myself and then take care of very different things.”* -YES alumni #5, male

In addition to the broader categories, the data revealed some factors that were not experienced by everyone but seemed really important for a smaller group of participants. One of them was religion, which was mentioned by almost half of the participants. Some participants were aware that their own religion had been a fundamental part of their growth. For others, a pivotal moment had been exposure to another religion either during exchange or in Kenya. Also places such as office or the current town had been important in the lives of individual participants. In addition, other aspects, such as own tribe, language or culture more broadly were defined as factors making a change in the lives of the participants.

*“...my church, you know, I am a Christian, and I try as much as possible to hold the Christian values every day. I think everyone who has helped me to know my journey, my religious journey, has been a critical part of my life, yea, and I consider that like something very important for me.”* -YES alumni #17, male

*“There is a very different understanding of how I viewed my own religion at the time, Islam. [...] But then I went and experienced other Muslims from different parts of the world, when I went to exchange, I was surprised. Because I saw it’s a whole new world there. It’s a completely different perspective. And I remember there was a girl who was asking me: “Why are you showing your hands?”, but she wasn’t wearing a hijab! She was a Muslim, and I was like: “But why are you showing your hair?” You know, and she was like “Hands is important” and I was like, “No, hair is important!” And we were both Muslims.”* -YES alumni #4, female

*“I’m from a Muslim family. [...] Then I go to live in the U.S. with Christian family, and it’s not only the family, my host mom was a kids’ pastor. So, I had to go to church twice a week. On Wednesdays for youth fellowship and on Sundays for mass. They didn’t force me to, they said you know, I work at the church, you are always welcome, it would be very nice you know if you come there...So it changed, you know, it totally changed my life.”* -YES alumni #2, male

The control group participants did not have an experience in the United States that would have affected them. The factors that according to them had mostly affected their course of life were people, especially parents, other relatives and friends, but also new people they had been meeting and exchanging ideas with. Another factor that all of them mentioned was social media and Internet in general, where it was possible to meet people from all over the world and find information about everything. The places that according to them had influenced their lives were mostly towns where they had lived for a long time.

## **6. Discussion**

Finally, it is time to return to the research questions and discuss both the theoretical background and the empirical results of my study together. I begin with the meanings of places and citizenships that the participants used during the interviews and then continue to the values that emerged throughout the empirical data. I will then observe the development and change that was reflected by participants themselves, before going to the final discussion about the Nairobi region YES alumni’s own perceptions of their roles at this specific moment in the changing world.

### **6.1. Meanings Given to Places and Citizenships**

In line with Edward Relph’s (1980) suggestions, the participants used places as basic elements of explanation in this study. Citizenship on the other hand was a more particular concept and emerged in the discussions mostly when something was specifically asked about it. Both concepts were given different meanings during the interviews. The meanings associated to sense of belonging were more difficult to divide between the two concepts, as place and citizenship were sometimes taken as synonyms, especially what comes to the national scale.

The places represented various meanings related to the themes discussed during the interviews, such as activities and sense of belonging. They varied in different scales and were experienced through symbolic means (Tuan 1976). Kenya, United States, Nairobi, home, Africa, Europe and the world were the most meaningful places to the participants if calculating the quotations quantitatively. Kenya seemed to be the most meaningful place, which is quite logical as most of the current activities of the participants, such as tertiary education, were related to Kenya and all the participants were Kenyan citizens. Education, employment, governance, corruption, people and physical landscape were the major themes that were related to Kenya as a place. The image provided by the participants fits to the statistics about Kenya (CIA 2018; UNDP 2013; Transparency International 2018; Fund for Peace 2018). Similar themes were sometimes broadened to touch the whole African continent. United States was related mostly to education and people. Europe, as well as European countries and cities were also attached to meanings related to education and employment opportunities. Nairobi was represented as a busy place with the most opportunities in Kenya. Meanings related to home varied between the importance of people and physical location. These images of the places, especially what comes to education, employment and opportunities in general, relate well with the information provided in the contextual background of this research.

It is interesting to observe what kind of places were not mentioned in the data. For example, places in Asia and Latin America were mentioned only once or not at all during the interviews, and thus were most likely not as meaningful to the participants. The whole world on the other hand was represented as a place where everybody lives together and has common issues. According to Tuan (1979), an effort of mind is required to make large units such as the world visible. The participants of this research seemed to pay attention to issues that touch the whole world. However, places of various sizes were used as examples and it should be noted that the themes of the interview could have directed the discussion towards certain scales, such as the national and the global over city and county levels. In addition, simply the fact that I as an interviewer was not a Kenyan citizen, could have influenced the participants to explain their meanings on a national level.

When considering the given meanings to places from Edward Relph's (1980) point of view, it could be noted that there were certain places that the participants observed more from an insider's perspective and others as outsiders. The distinction is not so explicit regarding the meanings given

to the United States for instance. It could be noted from the results that the United States was partly experienced as an outsider but included feelings of insideness as well. Many of the participants nevertheless used expressions such as “they” more than “us” when speaking about the people in the United States. Kenya was clearly experienced as an insider and the meanings given were closely related to the values and interests that are visible in this research more widely.

Regarding meanings given to citizenships, most participants primarily understood the concept as the official definition of Kenyan citizenship and appreciated the possibilities that come with it. Despite the legal definition, the participants nevertheless had global aspirations and dual citizenship was mentioned as a possible step what comes to global citizenship in general. There were also participants who noted the pressures of tribalism to Kenyan citizenship. As James (2006) explained, the different ontological formations disturb each other in the contemporary society. The participants seemed to view tribalism as a pressure to the current political organization, but global citizenship was not seen equally disturbing.

The meanings given to global citizenship by the participants included mostly positive connotations. For them, global citizenship mostly served to define a feeling as well as personal action. Global citizenship, regardless each individual’s definition of the concept, was considered worth promoting either through increasing the amount of exchange programs or for example implementing the concept better to the school curriculums around the world. No negative consequences were stated. When comparing the given meanings of the participants to the multiple meanings of global citizenship stated by Jääskeläinen & Repo (2011), cosmopolitan orientation, internationalization, glocalization as well as ethical global citizenship emerged in the responses but for example political and economic cosmopolitanism did not emerge as much.

It is visible in the empirical data what Isin & Wood (1999) state about the nation-state being contested from below and above. Nevertheless, the national-scale related meanings seem to equally matter to the participants. The whole division of “below” and “above” can also be questioned if using Seyla Benhabib’s term of flexible citizenship which removes the assumption of a single dominating scale of citizenship (Benhabib 2006; Mitchell & Parker 2008). Her concept helps explaining the participants’ simultaneous national and global aspirations. However, as Kriegman (2006) pointed out, global citizenship is not a legally binding concept, which is visible in the

meanings given by participants as well. It could thus be stated that Parekh's term "globally oriented national citizen" would suit better when describing the participants' orientations and geographical imaginations (Parekh 2003). This would remove the contradiction as citizenship would remain the legally binding definition, taken into consideration only when beginning to enhance changes in the legal sphere. Dual citizenship and possible other steps regarding mobility across nation-state borders would be examples of such development. Dual citizenship however preserves the idea of nation-state as the master political unit and rights-giver as an underlying assumption.

The participants seem eager to develop their skills that prepare them to cope with a possible future that is still mostly governed based on the nation-states but has international and global tendencies. Many of them also have career aims in the global professional-managerial groups that derive from the global cities (Durkheim 1992; Isin & Wood 1999; Massey 2005). Some participants are already starting a career that crosses the boundaries of Kenya, and most of the participants are currently studying in higher education institutions where it is possible to gain skills that are needed in those careers that Mau (2010) describes as part of transnational expert classes. However, the participants' responses signal that the necessary skills are not always easy to gain in the Kenyan institutions. It is yet to be seen whether Kenya's new curriculum responds to these aspirations (Kangathe 2017).

Citizenship and place were sometimes difficult to separate and categorize as separate concepts when transcribing the interviews, as the participants used similar expressions when describing for instance Kenya as a place, as well as the Kenyan citizenship. For example, the participants named both civic responsibilities and qualities of Kenyan landscape when discussing about Kenyan citizenship, so the categories were overlapping. Sometimes their expressions signified both meanings simultaneously. Especially when speaking about the feeling of belonging, it was difficult to separate place and citizenship as spatial and group identities. Of course, legally all the participants were Kenyan citizens, and everyone identified as Kenyan citizens as well. However, when asked more generally about belonging, many answered "Kenya" in general, not specifying any further. Based on the meanings given during the interviews, it can be assumed that Kenya was also an important place to the participants, a place where they felt a sense of belonging. This interpretation goes with Lewicka's (2011) observations about the connection between place attachment and time spent in the specific place. All the participants also seemed to have a

considerable amount of social connections in Kenya, which enhances the feeling of belonging as well (Relph 1980; Lewicka 2011).

It is notable that some of the participants began directly with global citizenship when citizenship was brought into discussion. They seemed to identify themselves with global terms over the national scale. It was also an important observation that one of the participants identified more with the county they were from, rather than Kenya. This was mostly related to the feeling that the national political actors did not take the county into consideration in political decisions, causing the feeling of an outsider. It was also slightly surprising that not many participants directly identified as part of the United States or any societies there, as only two participants mentioned currently feeling a sense belonging there as well. There were clearly places and people that many participants missed from their experience, but it seems that after the year they had rather started thinking themselves as global citizens who had skills to be able to belong anywhere in the world. This strengthens the argument about the participants having cosmopolite tendencies and a global orientation. However, it should be noted that most of the participants were to settle in Kenya, despite claiming that living somewhere else for a while would be a nice option.

Based on the results considering identity, it could be stated that some of the participants identify themselves primarily through the national scale and see national citizenship as their master political identity (Isin & Wood 1999; Bourn 2016). Others on the other hand see the national citizenship as one group identity amongst the others (Isin & Wood 1999). A few participants express identity in a more linear fashion as in the study of McFarland (2012), but most participants treat the concept more flexibly, describing it to be constantly shifting. These expressions fit better to Isin & Wood's (1999) theorizations of hybrid and fluid identities.

Mobility, global flows and the new conditions of globalization have led many scholars to stress what happens to identities in the future (Isin & Wood 1999; Massey 2005; Usher 2002; Ponto 2017). It is not possible to measure whether mobility has strengthened the feelings of belonging for the participants, but it can be noted that the participants sense belonging to both spatial and group identities. It is not always the same place or the same group that they have identified for their whole lives but could rather be multiple groups and places simultaneously, and even larger units, including the whole world.

Lastly, in case cosmopolitan citizenship continues to signify more of a membership in the new professions rather than a membership in a global polity and professional groups replace regional groups in importance (Durkheim 1992; Isin & Wood 1999), we should take Lappalainen & Rajander's (2005) question about whether global citizenship is only available to the privileged seriously. Andreotti & Souza's (2012) worries about the colonial legacy of the concept should be central in the discussion. In this research there are signals of professional identities, but the participants equally express their regional identities. Some identities involve both aspects simultaneously and are influenced for example by non-professional relationships to groups around the world. The question that emerges to be further researched is comparison to others in similar positions or regions is, what kind of identities do other youth of the world, the students of tertiary education, other Nairobians or other Kenyans have? Do they have the possibility to identify as global citizens or is it a privilege restricted to certain people only?

## **6.2. Values and Attitudes**

The values that emerged from the data fit likewise to the terminology of internationalization, cosmopolitan orientation, glocalization, ethical global citizenship and globally oriented national subjects (Jääskeläinen & Repo 2011; Parekh 2003). The values suggest that the participants are active learners, hunting for new experiences both locally and more broadly. They also have a humane orientation that motivates them behind their activities. Through these activities, the participants respond to the needs that they identify lacking in places and communities that are important to them. These values and activities relate to themes such as quality education, good governance as well as doing activities with and learning from other people.

Valuing high-level education and employment opportunities explain at least partly why the participants are currently mostly influencing in Nairobi and its surroundings. The data by NCPD (2013) suggests that Nairobi has the best opportunities inside the borders of Kenya. Several participants had future aspirations that reached beyond Kenya as well. Doreen Massey (2005) notes that the ones having more skills are able to move more easily across borders. The values emerging from the data show that these kind of skills that facilitate moving were highly appreciated among the participants. The values that emerged during the interviews also signaled about the participants' global orientation and their responses stressed the importance of diversity and acceptance, as well



as open-mindedness. In this sense the responses relate well with Papastephanou (2003) and Eriksen's (2014) observations that the most important aspect of global citizenship is how people engage with difference.

Another issue that should be brought into discussion here is Tiessen's (2011) critical aspect towards global citizenship and especially global citizenship from the Western perspective. As the theorists with post-colonial views have critiqued, there is a tendency of global citizenship falling to one specific "us" and "them" division. That distinction is between the helper and the one being helped. Slightly similar feelings aroused at least in some of the interviews despite the fact that most volunteering and community service was done in the local communities. This brings Durkheim's (1992) and Isin & Wood's (1999) theoretical observations about the changing identities during the times of global advanced capitalism into discussion. It should be questioned whether the participants have joined the global class of highly-educated academics and thus possess and strengthen certain class-divisions by providing the type of volunteer work that does not change the structures but hold the ones being helped in their positions.

Gaining new transnational experiences is also valued among the participants. Mau (2010) suggests that educational level is linked to the level of people's transnational involvement. It should be noted that the students selected to the YES program must have already succeed academically before their selection. Strengthening of class-divisions may therefore already begin at the point of selection. It should however be noted that academic success is only one criteria during the selection and the YES students are otherwise selected from diverse backgrounds. In addition, they have all received a scholarship for the exchange program. Direct conclusions about class-divisions are therefore difficult to make what comes to the past, present and future of the participants. Many of them dream about a transnational career but simultaneously value developing their own society and lifting others to powerful positions.

InterMedia's (2009) impact study on the YES participants and alumni signal that the goals of the YES program are well reached by most of the students. The values emerging from the data of my research also go hand in hand with the goals of the YES program (ECA 2016). For example personal ties with other people, respect for diversity, leadership skills and understanding civil society are goals that relate to the values of the participants.

### **6.3. Developments and Changes in Worldviews and Identities**

How did the participants then explain the activities they were currently exercising as well as other decisions, values and meanings they expressed during the interviews? Many changes were explained to be resulting from the exchange experience but also multiple other factors, such as people and places were underlined.

The impact study conducted by InterMedia (2009) points to multiple changes that the YES alumni experience and various skills that they develop during and after their YES experience. In this master's thesis research it was impossible to measure the impacts of the YES program but the fact that the participants themselves sensed that it had impacted their lives a lot is in line with the impact study. For example, the terminology related to global citizenship emerged directly from the exchange experience, either during the exchange year or during volunteering in the organization afterwards. Ponto's (2017) terminology of personal-level time-space compression could be used here to describe the participants' broadening experiences to the global level. Also having the platform to conduct volunteering and community service better was mentioned by the participants, which goes with InterMedia's numbers of 80% of the alumni having continued volunteering after their YES year as well as Ashleigh Caw's research about post-program involvement of the YES alumni (InterMedia 2009; Caws 2016).

Isin & Wood (1999) suggest that it is the new professions that allow people to participate in cosmopolitan citizenship. However, these participants have not all started their careers and yet they feel like global citizens. They have had other global relations which according to the participants have made them feel like global citizens. There are signs that in the future the participants will nevertheless possibly be part of the professional group that has a geographical imagination of the world as a one global unit (Massey 2005). What comes to the beliefs of the participants and the expert interview conducted, the YES program and the alumni activities have played a role in directing the thinking of the alumni towards global orientation.

The discourse about changes in political organization and citizenship was however related to some political activities that have happened in Kenya. For many participants the shift of thinking had been from tribal ontology towards the national and no signs of profession-based political organization were found in the data that related to this shift (Isin & Wood 1999; James 2006). The

global orientation nevertheless seemed to emerge both from the future career aspirations as well as being part of the volunteering communities. However, most discourses related to the global sphere did not consider political organization. Places and especially the people in the places influencing the participants' lives signal what Relph (1980) and Lewicka (2011) have observed about people and social interactions being essential in the meanings of places. This is what the participants also underlined when asked what had mostly influenced them in their activities and other decisions. Especially family seemed to have a big role in influencing the participants' lives, as well as childhood places.

#### **6.4. YES Alumni's Perspectives on Their Roles in the Changing World**

Based on the meanings, values, and changes, I now draw more general conclusions about the role of the YES alumni in the changing world. To start with, the participants represent a unique case, a group of people. In the Kenyan context, a small percentage of the population is studying or have completed their tertiary education (NCPD 2013). Out of these participants, everyone belongs to this category. Even smaller number of Kenyans have participated in a foreign exchange program, and the participants of this research are part of the only group of Kenyan citizens with a J-1 visa in the United States each year (Farrugia 2017). As my group of participants represents around 9% of Kenyans who have participated in the YES program, it could be assumed that certain results of this study would correlate with the rest of the Kenyan YES alumni. It should however be noted that the method of selection for the interviews could signal that the participants of this study are the most active YES alumni in the Nairobi region and thus all the results cannot be broadened to the whole group.

The most important observation of my thesis is that the participants seem to be globally oriented citizens. They are subjects who simultaneously relate to their country of origin as well as the whole world. They have cosmopolitan tendencies such as having plans to study or work somewhere else in the world besides Kenya. In fact, all the participants who are already working are somehow connected to the world beyond the borders of Kenya in their careers. The narrative of globalization is visible in the way the participants view their role in the world. Their activities, dreams and sense of belonging seem to be tied on the geographical imagination where the whole world is taken into account. Raskin (2006) anticipates these kinds of identities in the Great Transition initiative to

enable the shift to the global phase of humanity. The participants' skills, such as flexibility and adaptability to new environments, seem to have developed towards this direction. This relates the participants with Mau's (2010) concept of "mobile persons". High-level education, aims for international job-markets and a vision of the globe where humans are all together also relates with the group of professional-managerial class of global advanced capitalism (Durkheim 1960/1893; Isin & Wood 1999). However, it should be noted that regarding political organization, the discourse carried out by the participants was mainly tied to tribalism and nationalism and did not relate to global professional spheres.

The official YES program goals (ECA 2016) mainly aim to strengthen the international relations as well as change images and meanings between the two partner countries. It however seems like the participants have gained an even broader, global aspect to their worldviews and identities. The energy and trust towards the future of the participants is also visible throughout the whole research. Even though everyone is not counting on the government of Kenya and might be criticizing many issues, they find other channels to make an impact. These are related to for example their career ambitions and volunteering through different platforms. Education seems to have been a big theme throughout all the dimensions, which is quite logical as activities was one of the main focuses of the interview and education had touched or still touched the participants' lives very closely. The participants also fit to the category of skilled young Nairobians with tertiary education, that according to IOM (2015) are most likely to emigrate to other countries.

My research focused mainly on the participants' roles and the control group was there to help with the qualitative comparison and prevent over interpretation of the data. Thus, the results between the different groups should not be compared nor broadened to touch larger groups with similar backgrounds. However, what is interesting to bring into the discussion is the fact that also everyone in the control group had global aspirations of mobility even though they did not identify as global citizens. In this aspect they could also be represented as part of the IOM's (2015) group of possible emigrants.

All in all, the YES alumni in the Nairobi region could be described as possible skilled professionals of the future, who are flexible and able to move around in the whole world. They identify as Kenyans but are open to learning new things and take global issues into consideration. According

to themselves, the YES program has made a difference in their lives but also many other factors such as people and places have influenced their choices of activities and shaped their worldviews and identity.

## **7. Conclusions**

In this master's thesis, I have studied the perspectives that the Nairobi region YES alumni have towards their own role in the changing world. With the help of several scholars, I have explained the shift in hegemonic narratives from national to global and questioned whether focusing on mobility and flows could replace or at least be equally used beside the stable representations. I have taken a humanistic approach to observe the perspectives that the YES alumni have on their worldviews and identities and examined this further through the concepts of place and citizenship. By combining phenomenological-hermeneutic, phenomenographic and ethnographic methodologies, I have collected my empirical data in semi-structured interviews, observation and a focus group session. I have combined coding and qualitative content analysis to analyze the data.

The findings show that the group of YES alumni in the Nairobi region perceive themselves as globally oriented, mobile and flexible citizens who aim to develop skills to be able to respond to the new hegemonic narratives of globalization. Learning new things and seeking different opportunities especially related to education and employment are especially valued among the alumni. Regarding Kenya, Nairobi responds best to their aspirations. The alumni nevertheless acknowledge the opportunities beyond the borders of the nation as well. The YES alumni possess humane values and aim to make an impact through the platforms they have been provided. They identify with Kenya but also with multiple other groups and spatial identities, including the world in general. Their definitions of global citizenship relate more to personal ethics rather than political organization. Finally, according to the alumni themselves, the exchange year provided by the YES program is one of the major things that has changed the course of their lives.

My thesis is a unique case study that gives a voice to a group from the Global South with a transnational experience in the Global North. It demonstrates the multiplicity of experiences by being an example of a case that has not been previously studied very much. It is an example of

possibilities how the young generations may imagine the surrounding world, where they identify and how they vision their future. The aspirations of young generations should be considered when visioning the future of a city, country, or any other unit. Further research could broaden the study to comparatively observe the YES alumni or other people with similar transnational experiences in other parts of the world.

As a final thought, I want look towards another direction. The participants of this research seem to adjust well in case the future is imagined through globalization, flows and mobilities. With the skills they possess, they have the possibility to be part of the transnational expert class who lead the way. What happens however, when comparing the results of this study with a different group, for example the youth who act in the same environment as the alumni but have always lived in the same location? Or the youth without tertiary, or even secondary level education? How would they perceive their roles in the changing world? As we recognize the groups and skills that fit to the narratives of globalization, we must acknowledge that there are others who do not adjust to the changes as flexibly. Others, whose worldviews and identities do not match with these narratives. The question therefore remains, how to equally recognize everyone's dreams and concerns when making developments towards one direction or another.

## Acknowledgements

Pyry Pöyhönen, for ALL your support. Supervisor Venla Bernelius. Partow Izadi, Sirpa Tani, Sami Moisio, Tino Johansson, Paola Minoia, Senja Väätäinen-Chimpuku, Teija Mbura, Kimmo Svinhufvud and his book *Gradutakuu* for getting me started. The Department of Geosciences and Geography, University of Helsinki, AFS Finland, AFS Kenya, AFS/YES Nairobi chapter, NACOSTI, United States International University - Africa, Anthony Mulanzia and Terry Little for inspiration and making my fieldwork possible. Ian Mokaya Ogeto, Bruno Odhiambo Adika Najoli and Naroa Aierbe for company. Paula Bergman, Katja-Annukka Ranta, Salla Kolehmainen, Pia Bäcklund, Panu Lammi, Ville Savoranta, Marketta Vuola, Heikki Rahikainen, Ainokaisa Tarnanen, Elli Saari, Tuuli Rissanen, Heli Kainulainen, Maiju Palosaari, Tommi Lapio, Antti Autio, Meri Jaakola, Daria Tarkhova, Amina Suleiman, Michael Kihara and Markku Löytönen for problem-solving and support. Family, friends and @mythesisiary Instagram followers who have kept me going. NYT-liikunta by the city of Helsinki, Kumpulan speksi ry, Maantieteen Opiskelijat ry and the weekly sports that are organized. The education system of Finland.

Dedicated to the memory of Kathleen Sherman, my beloved host mother who was a guiding light throughout the thesis work and continues to be the inspiration of my actions.

## References

- AFS Kenya (2016). Local chapters. 2.11.2016. <<http://www.afs-ofie.co.ke/>>
- AIFS Foundation (2015). *FLEX/YES Grants Manual for Local Coordinators 2015-2016*. 61 p. AIFS Foundation.
- Akech, Migai (2010). *Institutional Reform in the New Constitution of Kenya*. 36 p. International Center for Transitional Justice.
- Andreotti, Vanessa de Oliveira, & Lynn Mario T. M. de Souza (eds) (2012). *Postcolonial perspectives on global citizenship education*. 245 p. Routledge, New York.
- Balibar, Étienne (1995). Culture and identity. In Rajchman, John (ed), *The Identity in Question*, 173-196. Routledge, New York.
- Bazeley, Pat (2013). *Qualitative Data Analysis; Practical Strategies*. 444 p. SAGE Publications Ltd., London.
- Benhabib, Seyla (2006). *Another cosmopolitanism*. 206 p. Oxford University Press, Oxford Scholarship Online.
- Billig, Michael (1996). *Arguing and thinking: a rhetorical approach to social psychology*. 2 ed. 325 p. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Bourn, Douglas (2016). *Global Citizenship and Youth Participation in Europe*. 86 p. Schools for Future Youth. Institute of Education.
- Brewer, John & Albert Hunter (2006). *Foundations of multimethod research*. 206 p. SAGE Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Burke, Peter J. & Jan E. Stets (2012). *Identity theory*. 256 p. Oxford Scholarship Online.
- Castree, Noel, Rob Kitchin & Alisdair Rogers (2013). *A Dictionary of Human Geography*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, United Kingdom.
- Caws, Ashleigh (2016). *Post Program Involvement in Community Service and Volunteerism: An Examination of Youth Exchange and Study Program Alumni*. 52 p. Capstone Collection. SIT Graduate Institute.
- Chitere, Preston, Ludeki Chweya, Japhet Masya, Arne Torstensen & Kamotho Waiganjo (2006). Kenya Constitutional Documents: A Comparative Analysis. CMI Report. The Chr. Michelsen Institute for Science and Intellectual Freedom. 15.10.2018. <<https://www.cmi.no/publications/2367-kenya-constitutional-documents>>
- CIA (2018). Kenya. The World Factbook. Central Intelligence Agency. 15.10.2018. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ke.html>>
- Commonwealth Secretariat (2018). Kenya: History. 16.10.2018. <<http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/kenya/history>>
- Crang, Mike & Ian Cook (2007). *Doing ethnographies*. 244 p. SAGE Publications Ltd., London.
- Crutzen, Paul J. (2002). Geology of mankind. *Nature* 415:6867, 23.
- Du Gay, Paul & Stuart Hall (2011). *Questions of cultural identity*. 198 p. SAGE publications, Los Angeles, California.
- Durkheim, Émile (1992). *Professional ethics and civic morals*. 2nd ed. 228 p. Routledge, London.
- Durkheim, Émile (1960/1893). *The Division of Labor in Society*. 436 p. Fourth Printing, USA.
- ECA (2016). *Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation. FY2016 Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program: Overseas Components*. 25 p. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of Citizen Exchanges. Youth Programs Division, Washington, D.C.



- Eriksen, Thomas H. (2014). Global citizenship and the challenge from cultural relativism. In Sterri, Aksel B. (ed). *Global citizen - challenges and responsibility in an interconnected world*, 52-60. Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.
- Fallers, Lloyd A. (1974). *The Social Anthropology of the Nation-State*. 171 p. Aldine Publishing, Chicago.
- Farrugia, Christine A. (2017). *Globally Mobile Youth. Trends in International Secondary Students in the United States, 2013–2016*. 17 p. Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact. Institute of International Education.
- Friedman, Jonathan (1989). Culture, Identity, and World Process. *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 12:1, 51-69.
- Friedmann, John (1995). Where we stand: A decade of world city research. In Knox, P. L. & Peter J. Taylor (eds). *World Cities in a World System*, 21-47. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York.
- Fund for Peace (2018). Fragile State Index. 15.10.2018. <<http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/>>
- Harvey, David (1990a). Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80:3. 418-434.
- Harvey, David (1990b). *The Condition of Postmodernity*. 378 p. Blackwell Publishers, Oxford.
- Helve, Helena (2015). A longitudinal perspective on worldviews, values and identities. *Journal of Religious Education* 63:2, 95-115.
- Hubbard, Phil, Rob Kitchin & Gill Valentine (eds) (2004). *Key Thinkers on Space and Place*. 356 p. SAGE Publications, London.
- iEARN-USA (2018). Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program. Programs. 8.1.2018. <<http://us.iearn.org/programs/kennedy-lugar-youth-exchange-and-study-yes-program>>
- InterMedia (2009). *Evaluation of the Youth Exchange and Study Program*. 64 p. U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.
- IOM (2015). *Migration in Kenya. A country profile 2015*. 201 p. International Organization for Migration, Nairobi.
- Isin, Engin. F. & Patricia K. Wood (1999). *Citizenship & Identity*. 189 p. SAGE Publications Ltd., London.
- Jääskeläinen, Liisa & Tarja Repo (eds) (2011). *Schools reaching out to a global world: What competences do global citizens need?* 128 p. Finnish National Board of Education. Kopijyvä, Kuopio.
- James, Paul (2006). *Globalism, Nationalism, Tribalism: Bringing Theory Back in*. 369 p. SAGE Publications Ltd., London.
- Jefferess, David (2012). Unsettling cosmopolitanism: Global citizenship and the cultural politics of benevolence. In Andreotti, Vanessa de Oliveira, & Lynn Mario T. M. de Souza (eds). *Postcolonial perspectives on global citizenship education*, 27-46. Routledge, New York.
- Johnstone, D. Bruce (2004). Higher Education Finance and Accessibility: Tuition Fees and Student Loans in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Higher Education in Africa/Revue De L'Enseignement Supérieur En Afrique*, 11-36.
- Kangathe, Mary (2017). *Building Peace and Global Citizenship through Education*. 28 p. Synthesis Paper. Revitalizing Education Towards the 2030 Global Agenda and Africa's Agenda 2063. Association for the Development of Education in Africa.
- Kiviniemi, Kari (2015). Laadullinen tutkimus prosessina. In Valli Raine & Juhani Aaltola (eds). *Ikkunoita tutkimusmetodeihin 2*, 74-88. PS-kustannus, Jyväskylä.

- Kjeldstadli, Knut (2014). The nation state in the age of globalizations - stone dead or rejuvenated? In Sterri, Aksel B. (ed). *Global citizen - challenges and responsibility in an interconnected world*, 92-102. Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.
- Kriegman, Orion (2006). Dawn of the cosmopolitan: The hope of a global citizens movement. *Frontiers of a Great Transition* 15. 31 p.
- Kymlicka, Will (1995). *Multicultural citizenship: A liberal theory of minority rights*. 280 p. Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Laclau, Ernesto (1995). Universalism, Particularism, and the Question of Identity. In Rajchman, John (ed). *The Identity in Question*, 20-35. Routledge, New York.
- Laine, Timo (2015). Miten kokemusta voidaan tutkia? Fenomenologinen näkökulma. In Valli, Raine & Juha Aaltola (eds). *Ikkunoita tutkimusmetodeihin* 2, 29-51. PS-kustannus, Jyväskylä.
- Lappalainen, Sirpa & Silja Rajander (2005). Maailmankansalaisia ja muuta väkeä. In Mietola, Reetta, Elina Lahelma, Sirpa Lappalainen & Tarja Palmu (eds). *Kohtaamisia kasvatuksen ja koulutuksen kentillä: Erontevoja ja yhdessä tekemistä*, 177-190. Suomen Kasvatustieteellinen Seura. Painosalama OY, Turku.
- Lewicka, Maria (2011). Place attachment: How far have we come in the last 40 years? *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 31:3, 207-230.
- Malm, Andreas & Alf Hornborg (2014). The geology of mankind? A critique of the Anthropocene narrative. *The Anthropocene Review* 1:1, 62-69.
- Massey, Doreen (1994). *Space, place, and gender*. 280 p. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Massey, Doreen (2005). *For Space*. 222 p. SAGE, London.
- Matthews, Julie & Ravinder Sidhu (2005). Desperately seeking the global subject: International education, citizenship and cosmopolitanism. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 3:1, 49-66.
- Mau, Steffen (2010). *Social Transnationalism*. 201 p. Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon.
- McFarland, S. (2012). All Humanity Is My Ingroup: A Measure and Studies of Identification with All Humanity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 103:5, 830-853.
- Metsämuuronen, Jari (2008). *Laadullisen tutkimuksen perusteet*. 3th ed. 74 p. Gummerus kirjapaino Oy, Jyväskylä.
- Mitchell, Katharyne & Walter C. Parker (2008). I Pledge Allegiance to...Flexible Citizenship and Shifting Scales of Belonging. *Teachers College Record* 110:4, 775-804.
- Myers, Garth (2015). A world-class city-region? Envisioning the Nairobi of 2030. *American Behavioral Scientist* 59:3, 328-346.
- NCPD (2013). *Kenya Population Situation Analysis*. 312 p. National Council for Population and Development. The Government of Kenya, Nairobi.
- Ochieng, William R. (1985). *History of Kenya*. 168 p. Macmillan Publishers Ltd., London.
- Omar, Athman Lali (2018). Director of AFS Kenya. Interview in Mombasa 19.6.2018.
- Paasi, Anssi (1983). *Maantieteen subjekti? Tie humanistisen ja behavioralistisen maantieteen nykytematiikkaan*. 531 p. Joensuun korkeakoulu, Joensuu.
- Paasi, Anssi (1997). Geographical perspectives on Finnish national identity. *GeoJournal*, 43:1, 41-50.
- Papastephanou, Marianna (2003). Education, subjectivity and community: Towards a democratic pedagogical ideal of symmetrical reciprocity. *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 35:4, 395-406.
- Parekh, Bhikhu (2003). Cosmopolitanism and global citizenship. *Review of International Studies* 29:1, 3-17.

- Pashby, Karen (2011). Cultivating global citizens: Planting new seeds or pruning the perennials? looking for the citizen-subject in global citizenship education theory. *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 9:3-4, 427-442.
- Pashby, Karen (2012). Questions for global citizenship education in the context of the 'New imperialism' - for whom, by whom? In Andreotti, Vanessa de Oliveira, & Lynn Mario T. M. de Souza (eds). *Postcolonial perspectives on global citizenship education*, 9-26. Routledge, New York.
- Ponto, Heli (2017). *Young people's everyday lives in the city: Living and experiencing daily places*. 158 p. Department of Geosciences and Geography, University of Helsinki. Painosalama Oy, Turku.
- Raskin, Paul D. (2006). World lines - Pathways, Pivots, and the Global Future. *Frontiers of a Great Transition* 16. 31 p.
- Relph, Edward (1980). *Place and placelessness*. Repr. ed. 156 p. Pion, London.
- Rodriguez-Torres, Deyssi (2010). *Nairobi Today: The Paradox of a Fragmented City*. 405 p. Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, Dar es Salam, Tanzania.
- SAHO (2016). Kenyan Timeline. South African History Online. 15.10.2018.  
<<https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/kenyan-timeline>>
- Sassen, Saskia (1996). Whose city is it? Globalization and the formation of new claims. *Public Culture*, 8:2, 205-223.
- Sassen, Saskia (2002). Locating cities on global circuits. *Environment and Urbanization* 14:1, 13-30.
- Scannell, Leila & Robert Gifford (2010). Defining place attachment: A tripartite organizing framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 30:1, 1-10.
- Schreier, Margrit (2012). *Qualitative content analysis in practice*. 272 p. Sage, Los Angeles.
- Sheller, Mimi & John Urry (2006). The New Mobilities Paradigm. *Environment and Planning A* 38:2, 207-226.
- Shipton, Ceri (2011). Taphonomy and Behaviour at the Acheulean Site of Kariandusi, Kenya. *African Archaeological Review* 28:2, 141-155.
- Smith, Neil (2004). Scale Bending and the Fate of the National. In Sheppard, E. & R. B. McMaster (eds). *Scale and Geographic Inquiry*. 192-212. Blackwell Publishing Ltd., Malden, MA, USA.
- Spear, Thomas (2000). Early Swahili History Reconsidered. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33:2, 257-290.
- Sterri, Aksel B. (2014). *Global citizen - challenges and responsibility in an interconnected world*. 113 p. Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.
- Streitwieser, Bernhard & Greg Light (2009). Study abroad and the easy promise of global citizenship: Student conceptions of a contested notion. 25 p. Paper presented at the *Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Annual Meeting*.
- Swyngedouw, Erik (1997). Neither Global nor Local. "Glocalization" and the politics of scale. In Cox, Kevin R. (ed). *Spaces of globalization – reasserting the power of the local*, 135-166. The Guilford Press, New York.
- Taylor, Peter J. (2004). The new geography of global civil society: NGOs in the world city network. *Globalizations* 1:2, 265-277.
- Tiessen, Rebecca (2011). Global Subjects or Objects of Globalisation? The promotion of global citizenship in organisations offering sport for development and/or peace programmes. *Third World Quarterly* 32:3, 571-587.
- Transparency International (2018). Corruption Perceptions Index. 15.10.2018.  
<[https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption\\_perceptions\\_index\\_2017](https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017)>

- Tuan, Yi-Fu (1976). Humanistic geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 66:2, 266-276. Retrieved from DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8306.1976.tb01089.x
- Tuan, Yi-Fu (1979). *Space and Place. The Perspective of Experience*. 2nd ed. 235 p. University of Minnesota Press, USA.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu (1996). *Cosmos and Hearth: A Cosmopolite's Viewpoint*. 204 p. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- UN (2017). "Total Population - Both Sexes". *World Population Prospects, the 2017 Revision*. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, Population Estimates and Projections Section. United Nations. 15.10.2018.  
<<https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/>>
- UN (2018). United Nations. Office Nairobi. 16.10.2018. <<http://www.unon.org/>>
- UNDP (2013). *Kenya's Youth Unemployment Challenge. Discussion Paper*. 79 p. Bureau for Development Policy, United Nations Development Programme, New York.
- UNDP (2018). *Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update. Kenya*. United Nations Development Programme. 16.10.2018.  
<[http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr\\_theme/country-notes/KEN.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/KEN.pdf)>
- Usher, Robin (2002). Putting space back on the map: Globalisation, place and identity. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 34:1, 41-55.
- Weber, Max (1927). *General Economic History*. 2nd ed. 401 p. Transaction Books, New Brunswick, NJ, USA.
- Witoszek, Nina (2014). The idea of global citizenship in the age of ecomodernity. In Sterri, Aksel B. (ed). *Global citizen - challenges and responsibility in an interconnected world*, 61-69. Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.
- World Bank (2016). *Kenya urbanization review*. 178 p. World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- World Bank (2018). Data for Lower Middle Income, Kenya. 15.10.2018.  
<<https://data.worldbank.org/?locations=XN-KE>>
- World Population Review (2018). Kenya population 2018. 15.10.2018.  
<<http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/kenya-population/>>
- YES Programs (2018a). About us. 8.1.2018. <<http://www.yesprograms.org/about/about-us>>
- YES Programs (2018b). Kenya. 8.1.2018 <<http://www.yesprograms.org/countries/kenya>>
- YES Programs (2018c). Kennedy-Lugar YES Alumni. 9.1.2018. <<http://www.yesprograms.org/yes-alumni>>

The map of Kenya was created using ArcGIS® software by Esri. ArcGIS® and ArcMap™ are the intellectual property of Esri and are used herein under license. Copyright © Esri. All rights reserved. For more information about Esri® software, please visit [www.esri.com](http://www.esri.com).

Photographs from Nairobi are from my personal collection.

## ANNEX 1. Interview Guide

Interview number:

Date:

### THEME 1. Actions

- Present yourself. Who are you? What do you do?
  - *What*
  - *Why*
  - *Where*
  - *When*
  - *Do you find it important? Why/ why not? Have you always considered it important? Why/ Why not? Has something changed your mind?*
  - *What motivates you?*
  - *Is there something that bothers you or are you disappointed in something in it?*
  - *Have you always been thinking you would be doing this? Why/ why not? What has changed your mind?*
  - *How important is it to you that you do it in that specific place?*
  - *How important it is to you that you do it with that specific group of people?*
  - *Would you like to do something else in the future? What, why?*
  
- What other things do you do in life? (work, studies, volunteering, hobbies, community service...)
  - *What*
  - *Why*
  - *Where*
  - *When*
  - *Do you find it important? Why/ why not? Have you always considered it important? Why/ Why not? Has something changed your mind?*
  - *What motivates you?*
  - *Is there something that bothers you or are you disappointed in something in it?*
  - *Have you always been thinking you would be doing this? Why/ why not? What has changed your mind?*
  - *How important is it to you that you do it in that specific place?*
  - *How important it is to you that you do it with that specific group of people?*
  - *Would you like to do something else in the future? What, why?*

### THEME 2. Dreams & Fears

- What is your biggest dream?
  - *Why/ where do you think that comes from?*
  - *Does it affect your current life and the choices you make? Does it guide your actions?*
  - *Has that always been your dream? Has something changed? How/ why?*
  - *What do you expect from your future?*
  - *Do you feel like you have the possibility to affect the way your life goes?*

- *Would you like to make an impact/ make a difference on something?*
- *Do you dream about something else as well?*
- What is your biggest fear or concern?
  - *Why/ where do you think that comes from?*
  - *Does it affect your current life and the choices you make? Your actions?*
  - *Have you always been worried about that? Has something changed? How/ why?*
  - *Do you feel like you have the possibility to affect that these things would not happen? How/ why?*

### **THEME 3. Citizenship**

- What does citizenship/being a citizen mean to you in person?
- What kind of actions do you relate to being a citizen?
  - *How are they visible in your life?*
  - *Do you want to be a good citizen? Why/ why not? How?*
  - *What kind of a person is an ideal citizen in your opinion?*
- Citizenship ties an individual to being part of a society. What society or societies do you feel part of?
  - *Why?*
  - *Have you felt differently before?*
  - *What societies would you like to be part of in the future? Why?*
- Have you heard about global citizenship?
  - *What does that mean to you in person?*
  - *Do you consider being one?*
- What kind of actions do you relate to being a global citizen?
  - *Are these actions present in your life?*
  - *Is it important? Why/why not?*

### **THEME 4. Identity**

- Where do you feel like you belong?
- Who do you consider as your family?
- Who do you feel responsible to?
- If you had to choose 3 places that define you the most, what would they be? Places that make you who you are.
  - *Why*

## **ANNEX 2. Background Information Sheet**

### **Background questions for the interview**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality/nationalities: \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you live (town and neighborhood): \_\_\_\_\_

Previous places of living (place and years): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Education: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

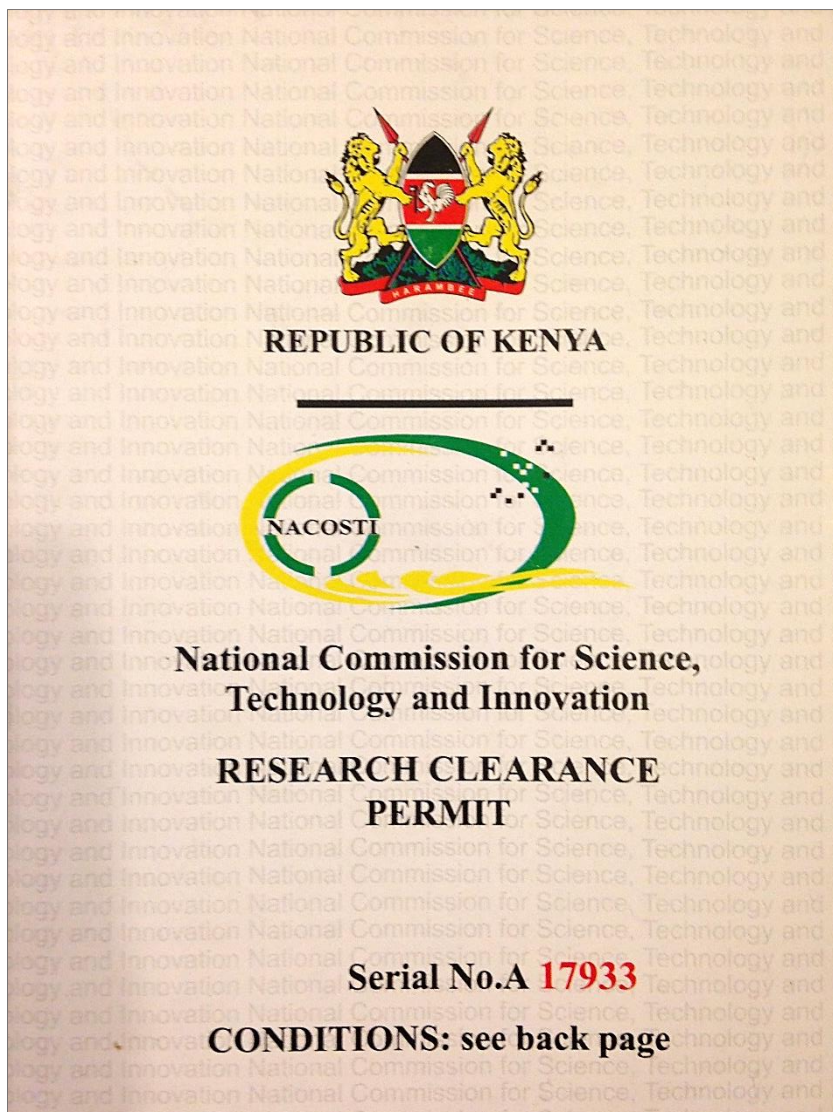
Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

The languages you speak (mark also your level: excellent, good, average, basic, weak):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Interview date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **ANNEX 3. Research Clearance Permit**





## **ANNEX 4. Information Letter to Participants**

### **Information Letter to Participants**

Preliminary title of the project: The Importance of Geographical Scales in the Thoughts of the YES Alumni in the Nairobi Region

My name is Nina Miettinen and I am a student in the Master's Program in Geography in the University of Helsinki, Finland. You are invited to take part in this Master's thesis research project, which I am conducting as part of the requirements of my degree. The research project has ethical statement from the the University of Helsinki Ethical Review Board in the Humanities and Social and Behavioural Sciences and a Research Licence from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) in Kenya. The Department of Geosciences and Geography has awarded the researcher with a travel grant that covers the cost of the flights. Other costs are self-funded by the researcher.

This project aims to understand the actions of the YES Alumni in the Nairobi region. If you choose to take part in the project you will be asked to attend an interview, which will last about an hour. The interview will be tape-recorded with your permission.

All information collected during the research project will be treated confidentially and will be coded so that you and your answers will remain anonymous. All data collected will be stored securely in a locked file. All files will be destroyed securely after the publication of the thesis. The information will be presented in a written report, in which your identity will not be revealed. You may be sent the final report on request.

I do not anticipate any risks associated with participating in this research project. Participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time without any specific reason and there will be no consequences for doing so. The data collected before your withdrawal can be used in the study with your permission. If you would like to take part in theresearch, please read carefully the consent form. By completing and signing the form you indicate that you will take part in this research.

If you have any questions about the research project or require further information you may contact the following:

Student researcher: Nina Miettinen

Email: [nina.miettinen@helsinki.fi](mailto:nina.miettinen@helsinki.fi)

Supervisor, responsible researcher: Venla Bernelius

Email: [venla.bernelius@helsinki.fi](mailto:venla.bernelius@helsinki.fi)

Thank you for your time!

## **ANNEX 5. Consent Form to Participants**

### **YES Alumni Study Consent Form**

page 1/2

You are being asked to take part in a research about the actions, skills and values of the YES Alumni in the Nairobi region. I am asking you to take part because you have signed up through my email inquiry. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

The purpose of this study is to learn what kind of thoughts and perceptions do the YES Alumni have regarding their actions as a citizen and YES Alumni. What kind of things do they find important and why? You need to be a YES Alumni to be able to take part in this study.

If you agree to take part in this study, I will conduct an interview with you. The interview will include reflection about your values and visions, and we will discuss your answers more specifically. The interview will take about one to two hours to complete. With your permission, I would also like to tape-record the interview.

This study will not pose specific risks to you. You may find some of the questions sensitive, but they will not surpass the standard of minimal risks encountered in day-to-day life. You may learn something new about yourself as you have the possibility for self-reflection during the interview. There will not be other benefits to you.

Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. If your interview will be tape-recorded, we will destroy it after transcribing the interview. There will not be any sort of information that will make it possible to identify you in any sort of published document of this study. All records and the transcribed tapes will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's device. Only the student researcher (Nina Miettinen) and the responsible researcher (Venla Bernelius) have access to the records. The records will be destroyed after finishing the research which I anticipate will be in six months after the interviews.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip all the questions you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect your current situation or your future in any way. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time without any specific reason. There will be no consequences if you decide to withdraw from the study.

If you have any questions, you may ask them now or contact me later: Nina Miettinen, [nina.miettinen@helsinki.fi](mailto:nina.miettinen@helsinki.fi). The responsible researcher is also available for contacts: Venla Bernelius, [venla.bernelius@helsinki.fi](mailto:venla.bernelius@helsinki.fi).

There are two copies of this consent form, one for the researcher and one for the participant.

- Statement of Consent -

*I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in this study.*

Your signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Your name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

*In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview tape-recorded.*

Your signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer fills:

Signature of the person obtaining consent \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name of the person obtaining consent \_\_\_\_\_

This consent form will be destroyed together with the data when the research is published.